

FEBRUARY 26, 2007

The American Conservative

A large, bright red sun dominates the upper half of the cover, set against a dark, textured sky. A black silhouette of a helicopter is positioned to the right of the sun, appearing to fly across it. The sun's glow creates a strong contrast with the dark background.

What If We Leave?

Duke's Tenured Radicals

Weekend Anti-Warriors

Carter's New Constituents

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BACK TO THE FUTURE

In his response to your Feb. 12 cover story by Paul Weyrich and William Lind, James Pinkerton says, “going backward isn’t really an option.” Further on, he asserts that conservatives have a great fear of “progress.” I disagree, and I have C.S. Lewis on my side.

In *Mere Christianity*, he set us straight on this point: “We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man.”

I’m with Lewis, Weyrich, and Lind.

HUGH MCINNISH
Huntsville, Ala.

A BEE IN THE MOUSE

Peter Wood temperately condemns New Anger while showing that it is not really new (Jan. 29). It is as old as the New Left—about two generations old. As he notes, it was already burning bright by 1968 in the Youth International Party and the Chicago demonstrators who asked the whole world to watch.

In 1962, the Port Huron Statement of Students for a Democratic Society delved with programmatic passion into the contradictions between ideal and reality that the privileged young had begun to grapple with. Having discovered that “the declaration ‘all men are created equal’ rang hollow” in an America riven by race and guilty of armed aggression abroad, SDS vowed to “search for truly democratic alternatives,” a principled renewal of America’s lost idealism. (The statement was so old-fashioned, it even referred to “men” instead of “persons.”)

The Kennedy assassinations radicalized and irrationalized the terms of debate, which began to sound more and more like the “Howl” Allen Ginsberg sent up experimentally in the 50s. Tricky Dick and Plastic Pat were objects of

genuinely personal hatred—partly, as Wood explains, because of Nixon’s role in McCarthyism but also because of the sort of people they were perceived to be.

“Taxi Driver” and other explorations of vigilantism purported to capture anger on the Right, among the so-called “aggro-Americans,” and usually reduced its causes to impotence, repression, latent homosexuality, loser-style insecurity, father-fixation, mother-fixation, or all of the above.

Meanwhile, punk politics kept the howl going into the ’70s. The Dead Kennedys—named for unresolved rage—had hits like “Holiday in Cambodia” and “California Uber Alles” that made raging equations of America with Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany. Artists competed to disfigure the image of Ronnie Raygun; one series pasted on public surfaces portrayed a smiling Reagan above the label “Fascist” or “Murderer” or “Racist” or “Sexist.”

And what is the antiglobalist movement but perma-rage for its own sake? The nihilist genie has been freed, gaining force with each turn of events.

New Anger is not new, but its ability to express itself has now been technologically enhanced beyond all recognition by the Internet. Fragments can be totalized, instants eternalized. Where it would have been impossible to get a newspaper to print the map of some “enemy’s” neighborhood, anything can be posted anonymously on the Internet, which has no editors, standards, peer review, fact-checking, or consequences to speak of. The Internet has given New Anger a million ways to destroy rather than simply defeat opponents.

It permits a single hateful commentary to balloon into a choking cloud of curses, flogged from one blog to the next with nothing added but invented crimes and crazed invective. And then, as Wood puts it, again temperately, “real politics comes to an end.” Where shall we go to find it again?

MARIAN KESTER COOMBS
Crofton, Md.

THE RIGHT THING

Only the most obstinate dead-enders still believe the Bush administration’s Iraq adventure is headed for success. Even timid Republicans have joined timid Democrats to offer up a time-wasting, nonbinding “resolution” meant to show very moderate displeasure with the so-called new strategy promoted by President Bush.

Perhaps cynically, many Democrats are avoiding effective measures to rein in the Iraq debacle. Do they hope the situation will so worsen that even more Republicans will lose their seats and their shirts in coming elections? As long as administration policies are careening downhill, full speed ahead.

It is time for true conservatives to send the strongest possible message to Republicans in Congress: stop the Bush juggernaut before future damage is done to the GOP and the nation.

As distasteful as it may be, Republicans—not Democrats—should begin impeachment proceedings. Waiting for Democrats to act may be akin to waiting for Godot—with disastrous results. It took a courageous Barry Goldwater to tell Richard Nixon that the game was up. If he were here today, I’m certain he would urge his fellow conservatives to end the current long nightmare.

Now and then it would benefit Republicans to admit that some ideas of the Democrats have merit. At this crucial time in our history, the radical Democrats who have been calling for impeachment know that it is the only means available to terminate the current malignancy. But it falls to Republicans—it is their duty—to step up to that proverbial plate.

DOUG GIEBEL
Big Sandy, Mont.

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REUTERS PHOTO ARCHIVE

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[CONGRESS]

BLANK CHECK & BALANCE

An ominous digression in President Bush's surge speech set Iran squarely in American crosshairs—and Washington watches on edge. White House spokesman Tony Snow was swiftly dispatched to smooth feathers: "there are no war preparations underway."

But Congressman Walter Jones isn't taking any chances. The next day, the North Carolinian—a Republican darling once distinguished for rechristening French fries, now fallen for criticizing the Iraq War—introduced a joint resolution requiring congressional approval for military action against Iran.

Jones knows his James Madison—"The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature. ... The executive has no right, in any case, to decide the question ..." He takes that mandate seriously.

"Absent a national emergency created by attack by Iran, or a demonstrably imminent attack by Iran, upon the United States, its territories, possessions, or its armed forces," his legislation reads, "the president shall consult with Congress, and receive specific authorization ... from Congress, prior to initiating any use of force on Iran."

That affirmation of founding principles should have broad appeal, especially among legislators increasingly aware of having been herded into the last Bush adventure. But as we go to press, just 27 co-sponsors have signed on. The supine remainder signal to the White House that if it wants another war, they won't allow the Constitution to stand in the way.

[NEOCONS]

KIDNAPPING KIRKPATRICK

The *Weekly Standard's* Feb. 5 cover story, an unfinished account of Dr. Jeane Kirkpatrick's "American girlhood"



written by Peter Collier, is nothing short of strange. Certainly Kirkpatrick's Feb. 6 memorial service at the National Cathedral deserved mention, as did the publication in late January of her new book on American foreign policy post-9/11. But the narrative of her quotidian childhood is surely not the stuff of cover stories—unless, of course, the American people have rejected your brand of conservatism and you hope to win them back by appropriating the legacy of one of America's best-known Cold War heroes.

Kirkpatrick's story suits the *Standard* well: bookish Southern Baptist girl rises from humble Middle-American beginnings to international prominence by helping craft the aggressive foreign policy that brought down the Evil Empire. But her usefulness to the magazine ends there.

In the late 1980s and early '90s, Kirkpatrick joined a chorus of neoconservatives—including Irving Kristol—who, in response to the crumbling of communism, promoted a more modest American foreign policy. "It is not the American purpose," she wrote, "to establish 'universal dominance' ... not even the universal dominance of democracy." Thus it's no surprise that, as Norman Podhoretz lamented, "She had serious reservations about the prudence of the Bush Doctrine, which she evidently saw neither as an analogue of the Truman Doctrine nor as a revival of the Reaganite spirit in foreign policy."

These words are from Podhoretz's fine eulogy of Kirkpatrick, which appeared in the Dec. 18 issue of—you guessed it—the *Weekly Standard*. Indeed, the *Standard's* editors would do well to pay more attention to the magazine's back issues. For unlike them, Dr. Kirkpatrick believed that America, "standing tall, talking straight, treating others with respect, and accepting nothing less from them," should first confront its problems "with optimism, initiative, and determination"—not with bravado and bombs.

[ELECTION]

RIGHTING OFF CPAC

Look who's not coming to dinner. Though he has just filed candidacy papers with the FEC, Rudy Giuliani hasn't accepted his invitation to CPAC, the annual D.C. conference where party activists and conservative foot soldiers inspect presidential candidates. CPAC organizer David Keene believes that the reception would have been warm: "Many conservatives admire his performance in NYC on crime, taxes, and after 9/11." Skipping the conference is odder still considering that in CPAC straw polls, Giuliani has landed in the top three spots two years running.

Rudy's accomplishments as a crime-fighting administrator and leader after 9/11 made him a fundraising favorite in the GOP, increasing his presidential profile. The question is whether he can

satisfy the demands of Republican primary voters, particularly on social issues. America's Mayor supports civil unions and abortion rights, but he downplays his differences with the conservative base: "John Roberts and Samuel Alito are exactly the sort of jurists I'll appoint," he stated.

His staff assured the press that Rudy wasn't snubbing conservatives by declining CPAC's invitation, but while social cons get verbal reassurances, another group will get the man himself. Far from the grassroots, Rudy will be making an appearance at the Hoover Institution, a neoconservative think tank. Where a man dines on rubber chicken, there his heart is.

[MEDIA]

HIT AND RUN

TAC noted with interest the "correction" printed in the *New York Times* last week, which read, "A review [about Bill O'Reilly] incorrectly attributed an anti-Semitic euphemism to Patrick J. Buchanan. ... Neither the reviewer, Jacob Heilbrunn, nor the editors of the Book Review have found evidence that Buchanan has ever denounced 'rootless cosmopolitans.'" Some of Buchanan's ideological opponents have used the phrase in characterizing his views, and the reviewer wrongly assumed from their writings that Buchanan had used it himself."

For a war-mongering neocon or fence-straddling neoliberal, punditry must come very easy. When you want to take a shot at someone more prescient and courageous than yourself about vital matters like whether to take the country to war, just invent some discrediting quote, attach it to your target, and the *New York Times* will publish it. If someone calls you on your fiction, well, as the "Saturday Night Live" character used to say, "Never mind." Something of the slur will stick anyway.

[CULTURE]

SAFETY BLITZ

Good game or not, the Super Bowl brings Americans together more than any event in the year. Even the harpies who used to tout bogus statistics linking domestic violence to viewing the contest have given it a rest. Appreciation of pro football unites us—rich and poor, black and white, Left and Right—to the point that it may be the single most American thing we have in common.

That's why two stories about retired players, reported at surprising length in the *New York Times*, attracted the attention they did. One was of Andre Waters, a former Eagles safety who committed suicide in his early forties; an autopsy showed his brain with advanced Alzheimer's symptoms. A second was the story of Patriots linebacker Ted Johnson, all of 34, who lives with the symptoms of early Alzheimer's.

That pro football takes a toll on the body is well known, but the trade of creaky joints in middle age for the joy of being well-paid gladiators in their twenties seems a fair one. Cognitive dysfunction is another matter. Experts agree that the brain injuries come from suffering successive concussions—players who get their "bell rung" and then return too quickly to action. But the sport has long put a premium on toughness, on getting back in the game.

There is no better answer than increased medical supervision: empowering team physicians to keep players off the field, stripping coaches of some authority. Given the stature of the modern coach and football's macho aura, such modifications will at first seem a kind of sacrilege. But they are better than the alternatives: revered pigskin warriors reduced not to walking with canes but to senility or worse—fear of which could strip the zest from a national pastime. ■

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Who Will Stop The Next War?

If Americans sickened by the carnage of Iraq wish to stop an even more disastrous war on Iran, they had best get cracking.

For the “On-to-Baghdad!” boys are back, warning us that the only way to prevent an atom bomb from being detonated in an American city is to attack and destroy Iran’s nuclear sites. And the forces needed to execute an attack are moving into place. Army Gen. John Abizaid has been replaced as CENTCOM commander by Adm. “Fox” Fallon, commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, who knows little about counterinsurgency but a lot about co-ordinating air strikes.

The carrier group *Stennis* is headed for the Gulf to join the *Eisenhower*. Minesweepers are headed for the Strait of Hormuz. American fighter-bombers have returned to Incirlik. Iranian officials have been seized in Iraq. Patriot missiles are being moved into Kuwait and Qatar. Why all this firepower—to secure Anbar province and Sadr City?

Bush’s anti-Iran rhetoric has been ratcheted up. Announcing his surge, Bush interjected that Tehran “is providing material support for attacks on American troops. ... [W]e will seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq.” This threat was followed by shoot-to-kill orders to U.S. troops encountering Iranians aiding the insurgency.

And Democrats are not going to let Bush get to their right. At the Herzliya Conference, John Edwards said that keeping Iran from nuclear weapons “is the greatest challenge of our generation.” “To ensure that Iran never gets nuclear weapons, we need to keep all options on the table. Let me reiterate—all options.”

At AIPAC, Hillary echoed Edwards: “In dealing with this threat ... no option

can be taken off the table. ... We need to use every tool about our disposal including ... the threat and use of military force.”

To Mitt Romney, this was wimpish. For Hillary had said she favors “engagement” with Iran. Roared Romney to Hill Republicans, “[W]e don’t need a listening tour about Iran. ... Someone who wants to engage Iran displays a troubling timidity toward a terrible threat of a nuclear Iran.”

Anybody think that Giuliani and McCain will let Edwards, Hillary, or Mitt be more menacing toward Tehran than they?

Consider the correlation of forces behind a new war.

If Bush goes home with Iran’s nuclear program not shut down, his legacy will be Iraq and a failed presidency. The Bush Doctrine—no nukes in rogue states—will have been defied by Pyongyang and Tehran.

Israel wants Iran attacked yesterday. The neocons need a new war to make America forget the disaster that they wrought in Iraq. Democratic candidates must be seen as hawkish as Giuliani and McCain. And the deadline for Iran to comply with UN Security Council directives to halt its enrichment of uranium is Feb. 23. What then is holding us back from war?

It is the realization, even on the part of the noisiest hawks, that war on Iran could precipitate a disaster worse than defeat in Iraq. A Shia uprising against U.S. troops could turn the Green Zone into Dien Bien Phu. Attacks on tankers and pipelines could send oil to \$200 a

barrel. America would have no international support and would receive virtually universal condemnation.

And like the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, bombing Iran could unite Iranians behind their rulers. Shia insurgencies could be ignited against Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Hezbollah could bring down the Lebanese government and attack Americans in the Middle East and perhaps here in the United States.

And what would an attack accomplish besides setting back an Iranian nuclear-enrichment program that by most reports is a bust?

What is the threat? Iran has no missiles that can reach us, no atom bombs. Though the Mullahs have been in power 27 years, they have yet to launch their first war. The war they fought was in self-defense. They can no more want a Sunni-Shia regional war than we, for they would be in the isolated minority. They want the Taliban kept out of Kabul and Iraq to remain united under a Shia majority, as do we.

It is said that we cannot negotiate with men responsible for the Khobar Towers. But Bush negotiated with Muammar al-Gaddafi, who was responsible for Pan Am 103, and Gaddafi agreed to forego nuclear weapons. Sanctions were lifted and relations restored.

If FDR can talk to Stalin, and Nixon to Mao, and Bush to the North Vietnamese (who tortured John McCain), why can’t we talk to Mullahs who held 52 Americans hostage for a year?

Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.) has introduced a resolution declaring that in the absence of an imminent threat or an attack upon us from Iran, President Bush has no authority to attack Iran.

Next step: get Chuck Hagel and Jim Webb to sign on. ■

What If We Leave?

When nightmare scenarios are used to justify endless war, it's time to wake up.

By John Mueller

IT IS CONTINUALLY proclaimed that an American withdrawal from Iraq would carry grim consequences. President Bush calls it a “nightmare scenario,” and Frederick Kagan predicts “catastrophe.” Few Democrats disagree: House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer warns that “precipitous withdrawal ... could lead to disaster, spawning a civil war, fostering a haven for terrorists and damaging our nation’s security and credibility.”

Indeed, the aftermath of withdrawal would be problematic and messy—like the present war—but it might not be as dire as increasingly desperate war supporters maintain.

The least persuasive scenario—but the one most likely to arrest the attention of Americans—is that Iraq will be taken over by international terrorists who would use it as a “safe haven” to “launch attacks on America,” as the president put it in an interview on “NewsHour with Jim Lehrer” in January.

Since al-Qaeda already has something of a safe haven in the unruly areas of Pakistan, it is not clear how adding space in Iraq would be of notable help. Moreover, international terrorism is essentially a conspiratorial enterprise carried out by tiny cells of plotters who can operate anywhere. Insofar as the 9/11 planners needed a safe haven, they found it in Hamburg, Germany, while those in London, Indonesia, Morocco, Madrid, and elsewhere were locals whose cells were based in their home countries and whose physical connection to the international jihadist move-

ment was limited at best. Furthermore, in the wake of a U.S. exit, Iraqis are unlikely to tolerate the continued presence of foreign fighters (who make up only a very small portion of the insurgency) because these adventurers have mostly spent their time killing Iraqis and because, for better or worse, their key mission will have been accomplished.

More plausibly, America’s exit from Iraq will exhilarate international terrorists because victory over the U.S. will seem even greater to them than victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden’s theory that Americans can be defeated, or at least productively inconvenienced, by inflicting comparatively small but continuously draining casualties on them will achieve apparent confirmation.

But that one is already lost: almost any exit from Iraq will have this effect. People like bin Laden believe that America invaded Iraq as part of its plan to control the Middle East’s oil and dominate the world—a perspective that polls suggest is enormously popular in Muslim countries as well as in such non-Muslim ones as Germany and France. The U.S. does not intend to do that—at least not in the direct sense bin Laden and others allege—nor does it seek to destroy Islam, as many others around the world bitterly assert. Such people will see almost any kind of American withdrawal as a victory for the terrorist insurgents, to whom they will give primary credit for forcing America to leave without accomplishing what they mistakenly take to be its key objectives.

Moreover, jihadists may be inclined to draw a special lesson by comparing the results of 9/11 with those of the Iraq War: it is much more productive to hit the “far enemy” when it comes near than to hit it in its homeland. That is, if their goal is to get the U.S. out of the Middle East, it is better for jihadists to cause it damage in places where its interests are limited rather than in places where its interests are vital. Thus, even if the result of the Iraq War exhilarates some terrorists, it would not necessarily whet their appetites for another 9/11.

After the American venture in Iraq is over, freelancing jihadists who trained there may seek to continue their operations elsewhere, like the jihadists who fought alongside the mujahideen against the Soviets in Afghanistan. If those experiences are any indication, however, the impact of these adventurers may not prove terribly significant. Following the example of their predecessors in Algeria, Chechnya, and Bosnia, they will most likely end up offering marginal reinforcement to rebel forces in places like Kashmir, Somalia, and Afghanistan. They might also try making trouble in their home countries, like Saudi Arabia, if they can manage to get back.

Whatever happens with the freelancers, the civil war in Iraq may become worse after the United States withdraws. But the ranks of the anti-American insurgency will be significantly reduced because those committed to forcing out the occupiers will presumably stop engaging in violence when their main

target leaves the scene. As in Afghanistan after the Soviets left, a warlord-dominated and partially criminalized civil conflict could persist, though it will more likely resemble the somewhat less horrible, if exceedingly complicated, factionalized civil war in Lebanon.

In time, the Iraqis, like the Lebanese before them, will have to sort this out—perhaps with the aid of some of their neighbors. The U.S. invasion almost instantly made Iraq a failed state, and only the exhausted locals can patch it back together, as many civil wars in Africa and Asia have demonstrated over the last decade. An eventual agreement among combatants is possible in all this, as is a military coup and the return of strong-man rule—particularly if the elected government is seen as incompetent. The notion, however, that a resentful new government in Iraq will cut off oil production to spite the U.S. makes little sense, as that would further impoverish the country and destabilize the regime.

Those who favor continued U.S. participation in Iraq's civil war need to explain how the American presence there—irritating to most Iraqis, polls suggest—will significantly speed the reconciliation process. They also need to indicate how many American lives they are willing to sacrifice for this end, assuming that it is even possible.

The Iraq Study Group and many Democrats advocate enlisting the support of Iraq's neighboring states to settle the civil war. This approach holds promise because Iraq's neighbors have good reason to be concerned. Although they may support different factions in Iraq's civil conflict, a stable, productive, diverse, and peaceful Iraq would likely serve their best interests. They certainly don't need floods of Iraqi refugees, and if the civil war can't be stopped, they would want to do all they could to contain it, perhaps applying the Europeans'

approach to the Bosnian war in the early 1990s. Their hearts—or at least their interests—are in the right place.

There is a dilemma, however: almost all of Iraq's neighbors are on the hit list of the neoconservatives who influence the Bush administration so heavily. In the run-up to the Iraq War, neoconservative guru Norman Podhoretz strongly advocated expanding Bush's axis of evil. "At a minimum," he suggested, the list should extend beyond Iraq, Iran, and North Korea to include "Syria and Lebanon and Libya, as well as 'friends' of America like the Saudi royal family and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, along with the Palestinian Authority ..." More realistic (and prescient) than other neocons about democracy, he noted that "the alternative to these regimes could easily turn out to be worse, even (or especially) if it comes into power through democratic elections." Accordingly, he emphasized, it will be necessary for the United States "to impose a new political culture on the defeated parties."

As Baghdad was falling in 2003, neocon Richard Perle triumphantly issued a similar litany of targets in a speech at the U.S. Army War College, adding for good measure—and possibly in jest—France and the State Department. In their book, *The War Over Iraq*, Lawrence Kaplan and William Kristol stress that the war they so passionately advocated was over a lot more than just Iraq: "The mission begins in Baghdad, but does not end there. ... War in Iraq represents but the first installment." And in a speech in late 2006, Charles Krauthammer continued to champion what he calls "the only plausible answer," an ambitious undertaking that involves "changing the culture of that area, no matter how slow and how difficult the process. It starts in Iraq and Lebanon, and must be allowed to proceed ..." Any other policy, he divined, "would ultimately bring ruin not only on the U.S. but on the very idea of freedom."

These men do not, of course, directly run the White House. But given how much they and other neoconservatives have influenced the administration's intellectual development and military decision-making, the designated target countries would be foolish in the extreme not to take such threats very seriously. As long as the United States and its seemingly permanent bases linger, most of Iraq's neighbors have good reason to feel profoundly uneasy. And for their own purposes, they have a strong incentive to assure that the American experience there is as miserable as possible.

Accordingly, in an important sense the ongoing presence of the United States makes productive co-operation by most of Iraq's neighbors problematic. But America's withdrawal would instantly shift the issue, supplying Iraq's neighbors with a comparatively unqualified interest in ending the civil war and stabilizing the country. The danger is that their efforts could mostly be devoted to supporting one side or the other in the civil war, which happened with the not-so-neighborly nearby interveners in Lebanon and Congo's civil wars. But pressure from the international community and a more modest, somewhat distant America, as well as the sensible appeal of the imperative to bring the Iraq disaster under control, may well be able to prevent that.

The sorting-out process may be facilitated if, as seems likely, the U.S. reacts to its Middle East misadventure by embracing an Iraq Syndrome reminiscent of the Vietnam Syndrome that restrained America from meddling further in Africa and Southeast Asia, while the Soviet Union foolishly gathered up a set of expensive dependencies there (and in Afghanistan) that hastened the demise of the Cold War.

The American public would probably be quite capable of shrugging off defeat and failure, as it proved in Vietnam as

well as in the lesser debacles of Lebanon in 1983 and Somalia in 1993. And since American casualties are what matter in the U.S., little attention would likely be paid if a civil-war bloodbath developed in Iraq. Accordingly, there would likely be few, if any, calls to send troops, contrary to the current cry of war supporters that if things fall apart we would just have to go in again. Since Iraqi citizens do not vote in American elections, the U.S. government would likely reduce financial support for the Iraqi government after American troops leave.

This process might impel a suitably mellowed country to abandon some of its self-infatuated rhetoric. The United States has become a “superpower” unable to make electricity to work in Baghdad and an “indispensable nation” incapable of garnering international co-operation when it really needs it, and it may come to re-examine its role in the world.

Perhaps America will even embrace the wisdom propounded by George W. Bush in the presidential debates of 2000, before the neocons moved in:

If we're an arrogant nation, they'll resent us. If we're a humble nation, but strong, they'll welcome us. ... I just don't think it's the role of the United States to walk into a country and say, we do it this way, so should you. I think we can help. ... I think the United States must be humble and must be proud and confident of our values, but humble in how we treat nations that are figuring out how to chart their own course.

It would be a new, and considerably improved, Bush Doctrine. ■

John Mueller is professor of political science at Ohio State University. His most recent book is Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them.

Honest Broker

Jimmy Carter's book stirs a critical debate.

By Philip Weiss

SINCE THE PUBLICATION last November of Jimmy Carter's book, *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*, his critics have pretty much held the floor. In fact, days before the book was available, its argument that Palestinians suffer “abominable oppression and persecution” at the hands of the Israelis was dismissed outright by Democratic Party leaders Nancy Pelosi and Howard Dean, as though it might harm their party in the midterm elections. Their disavowals gave way to the kind of vituperative feeling in pro-Israel quarters that is usually saved for Holocaust deniers and Nazis: Carter will go down in history as “a Jew-hater,” according to *The New Republic's* Martin Peretz; the *New Yorker's* Jeffrey Goldberg called him un-Christian; and *Commentary* published a long attack on Carter as “the very worst ex-President,” a would be “prince of peace” who was in fact a busybody with a martyr-wish, embittered by his 1980 re-election defeat.

In January came news that Carter's views had cost him among his own former adherents. Saying that Carter had abandoned an honorable role as honest broker between two sides, 15 Jewish members of the Carter Center advisory board resigned en masse—the sort of thrilling moral stand I hoped for, and never got, during much bigger presidential flaps like Clinton's sexual harassment saga and Bush's descent into Iraq.

The conventional wisdom seemed to be that Carter had damaged himself, and badly.

But the fury has masked a quieter trend—nodding support for the president's

views across the country. The book still ranks sixth on the *New York Times* best-seller list three months after publication, and Carter has taken on a moral halo among progressives and realists, the shotgun marriage of the Bush years. Film director Jonathan Demme, who mainstreamed gay rights with “Philadelphia,” is making a documentary on the book tour. “NBC Nightly News” featured the former president breaking down in tears on a panel at the Carter Center when relating a story of praying to God to give him strength before he confronted Anwar Sadat at Camp David in 1978, when Carter forged an historic peace accord between Israel and Egypt.

“I think the attacks in some ways have made the book more effective,” says Michael Brown, a fellow at the Palestine Center. “It's extraordinary, but when people oppose a book or a movie, and make a big fuss out of it, most Americans will say, ‘I want to know what this is about.’”

Some of the fury hides an old-fashioned power struggle. For the first time since the State of Israel was created in 1948, a prominent American politician has publicly taken up the cause of the Arabs, describing Israel's practices as oppressive. Such voices are common in Europe and in Israel itself. But they are uncommon here, where staunchly Zionist voices routinely assert that Israeli and American interests are identical, a view uniformly reflected in our politics and policies. The Carter groundswell seems to represent a real political threat to that claim. A recent batch of letters to

the *Houston Chronicle* ran three-to-one in Carter's favor. "Can't Israel defend itself without subjecting all Palestinians in the occupied territories to such shameful conditions?" one asked. "Nothing justifies treating an entire group of people as if they were second-class human beings."

The education Americans are seeking began nearly a year ago with an academic paper widely circulated in intellectual circles. "The Israel Lobby," by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, realist scholars at the University of Chicago and Harvard, sharply criticized the hegemony exercised by pro-Israel opinion makers in the United States. Famously, that piece was killed by the American magazine that commissioned it (*The Atlantic*) and eventually published by the *London Review of Books*. Now Jimmy Carter has brought some of the same arguments home and popularized them.

The ground seems to be shifting under our feet. M.J. Rosenberg, a progressive Zionist activist who works for Israel Policy Forum, wrote that he was surprised by the attitudes expressed at a Washington social gathering where Carter's book had come up. The book had empowered gentiles to voice criticisms they have long held. One such person said that the Jewish community is "out of line for getting 'bent out of shape' by a book," according to Rosenberg. "[N]on-Jewish Americans feel very inhibited ... talking about Israel out of fear that any criticism will be labeled 'anti-Semitism.'"

The Palestine Center's Michael Brown has been pleased by the new turn in the conversation. "He has gotten the word 'apartheid' in the discussion. A lot of progressives used to roll their eyes at the comparison and said it's too much. But Carter has put it out there. Carter has done an enormous service to the other narrative. Some of these groups are on the defensive for once."

Carter's first speech about his book was at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts on Jan. 23. I was eager to go. As a Jew who believes that the Israeli occupation is harming American interests in the Middle East, I am interested in the internal debate over Carter in the Jewish community. Jews have generally led the discussion of Israel in this country—and often closed ranks. Had Carter caused any slippage in the bloc?

I got to Brandeis's Gosman Center gym at 3 p.m., 90 minutes ahead of the speech, and the first signs I saw surprised me—literally. In the barricaded pen for demonstrators was a wide banner: "Jewish Voice for Peace Supports Jimmy Carter. End the Occupation." The Boston chapter of the Oakland-based group had brought a dozen people. Each had a poster describing an atrocity, like how many Palestinian children the Israeli military has allegedly killed (153) or how many dunams of Palestinian land Israel has confiscated in the West Bank in 2006 (7,749). In this pen, Jewish diversity meant a sprinkling of Zionists. Three young people represented CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America) and handed out a leaflet titled "Carter's Falsehoods," which claimed that Carter misrepresented Palestinian leaders as moderates when they were actually extremists. The piece featured photographs of a Brandeis student killed by a suicide bomber in 1995 and of the Palestinian prime minister meeting with Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The gym was jammed with 2,000 folding chairs. All soon filled. Carter was the first president to visit the campus in 50 years (Harry Truman being the last), and there was excitement, along with an air of respect and decorum. Another surprise: I'd been expecting rage. After all, Shulamit Reinharz, the wife of Brandeis President Jehuda Reinharz, had called Carter a "plagiarist" in an article for

The Jewish Advocate and said, in a vicious spirit, that Carter should have kept his thoughts to himself, just as he should have kept private the famous "lust in my heart" confession he made during his presidential campaign 30 years ago.

But Mrs. Reinharz was not in attendance ("major commitment out of town," she told me later), and looking around, I saw only a handful of students wearing blue and white in solidarity with Israel, a common response when critics of Israel visit campus. I talked to four of them—all female members of Zionists for Historical Veracity, a Brandeis group dedicated to spreading the word that Israel is the only democracy in the region. This is a new tactic for responding to the criticism of Israel—showing that Israel guarantees free speech, gay rights and women's rights, when Arab tyrannies do not. It sidesteps the question of human rights and political self-determination for the estimated 3 million Palestinians under Israeli authority. I brought up the occupied territories, and one girl said that I meant Judea and Samaria. "That's the way it's referred to in the Bible," she noted.

I asked the girls why so many Arabs seem to hate Israel. "I wish we knew," one answered. "I think it has a lot to do with the education system," another said. "Sadly for the children being affected, they are not getting the correct historical account, and a new generation is brought up to hate Israel."

My impression of diversity was reinforced by a talk with Getzel Davis, a long-haired kid whose t-shirt said in Hebrew, "You Should Love Your Neighbor as Yourself." Davis criticized Carter as imbalanced, singling out the Israelis. Yes, it was time to acknowledge that there was a cycle of violence in Palestine, but it must be considered "holistically." Then Davis told me how haunted he was by a visit to the Orthodox Jewish settlement in

Hebron in the West Bank: "The most broken place I've ever been in my life."

Carter arrived, and—what a surprise—no one booed. People rose to their feet and applauded strongly for a minute. Seventy minutes later, when Carter smiled his Cheshire cat grin and disappeared, the applause was even more sustained.

In the interim, he achieved a lot. His performance had a vulnerable, human manner. He flattered Brandeis by saying that it was the most exciting invitation to speak he had received since the Congress called on him to give his inaugural address exactly 30 years before. And this might have been a sincere statement; despite being a statesman whose every utterance has a public quality, Carter actually seemed nervous. He said, with a hint of defensiveness, "I don't often write my speeches, but I decided to this morning. I read over it before I left home in Plains, Georgia. It took 15 minutes without any pauses for applause. So I can predict for you that I'll be ready to answer questions in about 15 minutes."

The second question, about the hurtfulness of the word "apartheid," occasioned Carter's broken moment, when in a halting voice he described his pain at the accusations against him:

I am deeply concerned about the tensions that might have arisen. That was not my intention at all. And I've been hurt and so has my family by some of the reaction. I've been through political campaigns for state senate and for governor and for president, and I've been stigmatized and condemned by my political opponents and their stories. But this is the first time that I've ever been called a liar and a bigot and an anti-Semite and a coward and a plagiarist. This has hurt me. I can take it. But I think

that that group of people who have made those statements—sometimes in full-page ads in the *New York Times*—I think they are an extreme minority.

Carter was trying to mend bridges. His book has pained many Jews for a reason. The strong feeling throughout the book is one progressives often have on visits to the Holy Land: that the Arabs we meet are kinder and more righteous than the Israelis, that the Israelis are the power. The moral core of Carter's book can be seen in his treatment of Hafez al-Assad, the late Syrian dictator reviled in this country. Carter seems to see Assad as brilliant, and his text offers, without contradiction, Assad's analysis of the Israelis as expansionist and racist, imitating the Jews' European persecutors by performing ethnic cleansing on Arabs. At other times, Carter openly identifies, as a Christian, with the Christian Arabs whom Israel has pushed around. Israeli leaders, "[u]niversally ... seem rather to evoke his dislike, and Israel as a whole seems to have the same effect on him," neoconservative Joshua Muravchik wrote in *Commentary*. I share some of Carter's anger, but it would have been diplomatic for him to say that some of his best friends are Jews, a statement he made at Brandeis when he reeled off the names of Jewish former aides.

The speech offered an ashen Carter who understood that Jews suffer too. When a youth asked about a line on page 213 of the book, Carter simply apologized for it. The sentence stated that Palestinians must abandon suicide bombing when they are granted a state. Of course, they ought to abandon such tactics right now, Carter said. "That sentence was worded in a completely improper and stupid way. ... So again let me repeat, I apologize for the wording of that sentence. It was a mistake on my part, and it is now being corrected in future editions."

No one lacking outsize political talents ever got to be president, and the ashen moments only bolstered Carter's refrain: Jewish settlers have confiscated the best land in the West Bank, which is after all only 22 percent of the original Palestine, including choice hilltops and water sources. Israel has built a "spider-web" of roads serving the settlers alone. This was wrong, indeed abominable, but this reality had not been reflected widely in the United States. That is why he wrote the book. Hard to argue with. And more than that, embarrassing to Jews.

While the audience may not have embraced Carter, it honored him, and having cut through the name-calling, he issued a challenge that hung in the air: Don't believe me, he said. Find out for yourself. Observe the conditions of Palestinian life and see for yourself whether I am exaggerating. Bring back a report. It will have a huge impact—on Israel, on Brandeis, on Congress, and even on the president. (Brandeis has since taken up his challenge and will send a delegation.)

"Make it three professors and seven students, and go to the West Bank, and just spend three days. I can give you a list of people that you might want to talk to, or you can use your own judgment."

As I walked out, I sensed a thrill in the crowd. I met two older Jews in the front hall who were as jangled as I was. Jack Porter was handing out copies of a positive review of Carter's book by leftwing Knesset member Yossi Beilin, saying that the "agonizing" book correctly identifies the path Israelis and Palestinians are moving down. Porter said that he had never felt so empowered: "This is a watershed event. It's about free speech in the Jewish community. For the first time in two decades, I'm not feeling guilty. I felt that criticizing Israel would be feeding its enemies. But now I see it's just the opposite. A lot of us held back."

Nearby was a man of about 80 with a middle-European accent, trembling

with fury: "He is a politician, and he knows what to avoid and how to dodge questions. He didn't tell any lies, he just didn't tell the truth." "Were you moved at all?" I asked. "Yes. I was moved to think: we survived Carter. The country was tanking under him because he told Americans to expect less."

Neither of these men was a student. Not eligible for rationed tickets to the event, they watched on a remote feed in Shapiro Campus Center. They had come into the gym to hear Alan Dershowitz, a Harvard law professor, respond to Carter's speech. Brandeis had at first demanded that Carter debate Dershowitz. The president had demurred, saying that the professor didn't know anything about occupied Palestine, and Brandeis then invited him on his own, to be followed by Dershowitz. (The Radical Students Association subsequently demanded that Dershowitz be followed by his nemesis, Norman G. Finkelstein, who was tentatively scheduled to visit the campus this month.)

Carter showed tactical smarts by saying that he had declined to meet "a Harvard professor" who wanted to debate him. "I am that nameless Harvard professor," Dershowitz announced, grinning, but it was plain that the comment upset him. He pointed out that he had met Carter on a few occasions, and Carter had once sought his opinion. Later, when he was interviewed by local television, Dershowitz said that Carter was a "little bit of a coward for not mentioning my name, and a little too cute."

Of course, Alan Dershowitz and Jimmy Carter are very different types: one a combative defense lawyer, the other a lofty statesman. Having never seen the Dershowitz show before, I was impressed. He's smart, informative, and quick on his feet. He makes jokes. He encourages students to challenge and rebut him. He doesn't always like what they have to say. When a Palestinian girl nervously said

that going through a checkpoint the previous summer was "the most humiliating experience that you ever have," Dershowitz broke in: "You're talking to the wrong people." He meant that Palestinians could make the checkpoints disappear by ending violent attacks. (Yes, but what about the 500 checkpoints said to be inside the territories as opposed to the 30 on the Israeli border?)

When a student suggested that Hamas must be respected because it won an election, Dershowitz said that she was probably for the Nazis when they were elected in 1933. When another student said that he had lost count of the number of times Dershowitz cited Adolph Hitler and the Nazis, Dershowitz stomped him by recounting anti-Jewish statements by Rafsanjani and Ahmadinejad, then saying, "Everyone thought Hitler was a tinhorn dictator" in the 1930s. If France and England had taken Hitler at his word and crushed him then, they would have gone down "as the bullyboys of history." That was the great vice of preemption, he said. But it was also the great virtue: they would have "saved tens of millions of lives." The kid shut up and sat down, punctured. Jonathan Demme's documentary photographers, who had not been allowed in the hall for the Carter event, rushed over with a release for him to sign.

Dershowitz's answer was brilliant, but it was incomplete. His references to Hitler and the Nazis were not confined to Iran. For instance, Dershowitz referred to the pre-1967 border in Israel as the "Auschwitz border." After the speech, I stood with a group of students getting Dershowitz's autograph and asked him what that meant. He said it was former Israeli Ambassador to the UN Abba Eban's statement and referred to the fact that Israelis were extremely vulnerable to Palestinian attack inside the borders of the Jewish state from 1949-67.

I introduced myself to history professor Jacob Cohen, who had emceed the

Dershowitz event, and asked him about my impression that Brandeis had showered Carter with respect. He said, "The respect and the open-mindedness was not an illusion. I think he speaks very naively and often harmfully. He speaks to a vein of idealism, and that's what young people are."

Well, I said, young people want to have a hopeful view of history. They don't want to hear about the Holocaust all the time. They don't want to see history as having a tragic destination.

Cohen became angry: "You're talking about a symbol, the desecration of which deeply hurts the Jewish people ..." He went on to say that if I thought that "the elimination of Israel" would end Islamic world's hatred of the West, I was wrong. "Osama bin Laden is still remembering the Crusades."

It seemed to me that like the 80-year-old I had met in the hall, Cohen was hurt and frightened by Carter's acceptance and felt that it might signal a period of renewed persecution of the Jews.

But that was the last I was to hear of the Holocaust that night. I spent the rest of the evening with Brandeis kids, none older than 21 or so, and the Holocaust isn't nearly as real to them as it is to Cohen's generation and not as prominent for them as it was for my generation. They have little personal connection to it and are imagining the world in different ways. I would say unencumbered by it, Cohen would say nescient.

In the road in front of the gym was a clump of five or six students, most of them Jews, three of them wearing Palestinian scarves (or kaffiyehs)—a defiant symbol. Jews like these are becoming more common in American cities. The kids were saying that Carter had not gone far enough, that he hadn't talked about the Israel lobby. "There has been a dam of silence," one of them said. I asked the kids how many Jews on the Brandeis campus felt the way they did.

They looked around at one another. "About five," one said, and they laughed.

Nearby, an Arab student wearing a *kaffiyeh* said that Arabs were gathering at 9 p.m. in Shapiro to discuss the Carter visit. I went but couldn't find the Arabs. A kid working on a punk magazine hopped on his computer and said that Democracy for America, a group inspired by Howard Dean, was meeting in the university's replica Scottish castle, a campus landmark.

I soon found myself with 18 kids in a circle. Most were Jewish, ranging from liberal to progressive. Fearing anger and dispute, Danielle Sunberg, the group's chairman, had brought a stuffed teddy bear. The rule was that you could only talk when you were holding the bear. When you were finished, you could throw it to someone else.

For the second or third time that day, I was surprised. A couple of students were sharply critical of Carter, but mostly they were enthused. "The campus is on fire tonight," one remarked. It was exciting to them that the president had visited. "He was making a mea culpa to the Jewish community. To correct things, to move forward..." said Ari Fertig. They were moved by his largeness of spirit. They felt that they had a positive role to play in this discussion; they wanted to play their part as young people. "We need a few generations to die out," one said.

Several students said they were offended by Dershowitz's tone. Even though they tended to agree with him more than Carter on substance, they were angered that he had been so disrespectful to students, jumping in on what they were saying. "He was rude," one said.

Twenty feet away in the common room, two students watched a television airing George W. Bush's State of the Union speech. Bush's words broke in on our group's conversation, but he was largely ignored. Whatever Jimmy Carter's failings

as president long ago, he has touched a moral chord in our public life, one that countless Americans want to rediscover, especially now that Bush's militarism has created a bloody cul-de-sac in Iraq.

"Just now I heard George Bush saying, 'We have to take the fight to our enemies,'" James Ansorge said. "I'm of Jewish blood, but I'm not an Israeli citizen, I'm an American citizen. I'm not much of a historian of Israel and Palestine, but I do see Israel in perpetual conflict with their neighbors ... and that seems to be extending to us now. Many Arab extremists seek the destruction of the Israeli state, and now they want the same for us. Things are becoming very belligerent. It's at a breaking point. We must start the peace process."

Again I heard the term "watershed." Fertig, tall, curly-haired, and in a sweat-

shirt, said, "You know, before tonight, I was very hesitant to ever debate the Middle East. I think this is a watershed moment, both personally and for this community. ... I am trained in the pro-Israeli way of thinking. This is the first time I came away from a forum more favorable to the Palestinians—the first time I ever came down more favorably on the guy supporting Palestinians than on Israel."

The teddy bear was thrown this way and that until at the end it was passed around the circle for closing statements. When it came to me, I said that I hoped my generation's attitudes died out and made way for theirs. ■

Philip Weiss is at work on a book about Jewish issues. He writes a blog for the New York Observer, mondoweiss.com.

Rotten in Durham

How Duke's academic mandarins became a lynch mob

By Richard Bertrand Spencer

THE PHENOMENON of the "Duke Lacrosse Case" has left serious people with a sense that something has gone terribly wrong with Duke's academic culture. Following news of the allegations, students predictably banged pots and pans, raised banners reading "castrate," and passed out wanted posters with the photos and e-mail addresses of all the white members of the lacrosse team.

The most irresponsible and irrational claims came not from college co-eds, however, but from a broad swath of the faculty. The so-called "Group of 88," a circle of mostly humanities professors, signed a full-page manifesto—"What

does a Social Disaster Sound Like?"—published in Duke's student newspaper, *The Chronicle*. The Group announced that the lacrosse case was a consequence of a longstanding "disaster" at Duke created by institutional sexism and racism.

Other professors behaved commendably throughout, and even Duke's president, Richard Brodhead, has shown courage of late by readmitting the accused players. But the speed at which the administration parroted some of the Group's most outrageous claims, and established a variety of multiculturalist committees, reveals the degree to which the ideology of the Group of 88 has achieved hegemony on campus.

Far from coming as a shock, the accusations that white students gang-raped a black stripper reached the Group as a kind of fulfillment of a dream. The case was, for them, an affirmation of what they always knew about Duke, Durham, and American society in general.

The Group's main critics have chiefly focused on its presumption of guilt and demonization of the players. But they have left unexamined the "foundational myths" that underlie the Group's response and give meaning to its claims.

By myths, I am not referring simply to falsehoods. It is obvious that the Group of 88 is disconnected from reality. According to the Department of Justice's most recent National Crime Victimization Survey, 15.5 percent of white rape victims were attacked by blacks, while 0.0 percent of black victims were raped by white males. The notion that assaults on poor black women by preppy college students is a pressing national problem is patently absurd. This being said, no member of the Group of 88 is delusional or merely uninformed, so the challenge is to discern the presuppositions that lead them to understand the lacrosse case as they do.

That the Group is generally on the Left is true: a study by the Duke Conservative Union found that registered Democrats outnumber Republicans in humanities departments 25 to 1. Still the Group's behavior does not derive from a coherent political ideology; nor does it support any partisan ends. Simply condemning them as a "bunch of liberals" is entirely unhelpful.

A better understanding can be ascertained by looking closely at the Group's manifesto. The Group claims to be "listening" to the community, and the announcement features quotes from Duke students, replete with predictable accusations of racism. Most striking are the more general claims, at once hyperbolic and exceedingly vague. One

woman says, "We want the absence of terror. But we don't really know what that means ... we can't think. That's why we're so silent. ... Terror robs you of language and you need language for the healing to begin." The Group wants to "listen," but the victims at Duke seem unable to speak. The advertisement ends with a reprimand, "Duke is not really responding to this." And yet, an explanation of how Duke might possibly

a Yiddish insult that carries no racial content whatsoever.)

Just as he was willing to sacrifice a Penn graduate student, at Duke, Baker has sent e-mail rants to a lacrosse player's mother in which he refers to the team as a "scummy bunch of white males" and "farm animals." With so much left to do, Baker has again moved on, this time to Vanderbilt. Expect the next campus race scandal to occur in Nashville.

FAR FROM COMING AS A SHOCK, THE ACCUSATIONS THAT WHITE STUDENTS GANG-RAPED A BLACK STRIPPER REACHED THE GROUP AS A KIND OF FULFILLMENT OF A DREAM.

respond to general "terror" is neither offered nor expected.

Who would sign their names to such drivel? The Group is comprised of baby-boom scholars who further divide into two subgroups: professional black activists and rather tame liberals.

The professional activist element represents an interesting development on college campuses. While some are prolific scholars, many others have achieved tenure with little or nothing in the way of publications or research. Many of these professors can only justify their presence at Duke—and their six-figure salaries—through their campus politics. The lacrosse case gave them something to do.

Houston Baker is the prototypical example. A professor of English, he has built his vaunted reputation as a "public intellectual" through the fabrication of race scandals. In 1993, while Baker was at the University of Pennsylvania, he instigated campus-wide protests and attempted to have a student expelled for saying, "Shut up, you water buffalos," while being harassed by a black sorority. (The student, Eden Jacobowitz, was Jewish, and the phrase is a translation of

Topping them all, at last in terms of rhetorical panache, is Mark Anthony Neal or, as he frequently refers to himself, the "Thug-Nigga-Intellectual"—a "dangerous nigger and America has never romanticized about its fear of angry 'don't give a f--k' niggers." Neal, a professor of English, claims that he must take on this persona because of his alienation from evil white Duke, evidenced by the mean looks he gets while "chillin' with my homey Gramsci" at Starbucks. Despite his claims, the university has actually "romanticized about" Professor Neal a great deal, featuring a lengthy article on him in last summer's alumni magazine.

The myth that Neal lives by informs his claim that whenever he "rolls into the classroom on the first day of class," there is always somebody "in the house quietly utter[ing] 'who's the nigger?'" That a professor heard students whispering the N-word at politically correct Duke approaches the outer limits of credibility. What's more instructive is Neal's response: "I'm the nigga that gonna intellectually choke the living s--t out of you."

Last April, activists like Baker and Neal found institutional validation in the

Campus Culture Initiative (CCI), created as a kind of Committee on Public Safety to ensure the proper amount of multiculturalism among Duke undergraduates. Yet as the various participants admitted in interviews, their discussions were poorly attended and basically amounted to preaching to the converted. In the end, even the professional agitators began to lose interest. On Jan. 3, Professor Karla Holloway, chair of the "sub-committee on race," resigned from the CCI, protesting the university president's decision to reinstate the accused players. Holloway complained that, although Brodhead established the CCI and allowed her free reign, he did not protect her from criticism in various blogs and publications.

Professional victims are a minority in the Group of 88, however. It is composed mostly of white liberals, who are legitimate scholars and achieved tenure on the basis of merit. When they discuss, say, the American presidency, Nazi Germany, or the poetry of Robert Brasillach, they do so with an acumen and responsibility absent from their writings on the lacrosse case. Moreover, unlike the activists, it is not obvious what they have to gain by sowing race hysteria.

Yet the lacrosse case is deeply important to them, and their writings reveal that they are haunted by a kind of "primal scene" of sexual-racial oppression. In an essay for *The Chronicle*, Bill Chafe explicated the myth: "Sex was an instrument by which racial power was manifested and perpetuated. Why are most African Americans of a lighter hue than Africans from Nigeria? Because at some point in the past, or present, white males have 'had their way' with black women. White slave masters were the initial perpetrators of sexual assault on black women, subsequent generations continued the pattern." "Subsequent generations," Chafe intimates, that include the accused Reade Seligman and Collin Finnerty.

Chafe then goes on to claim that the 1954 lynching of Emmett Till "helps to put into context what occurred in Durham." He concludes, "Whether or not a rape took place, there is no question that ... white students hired a black woman from an escort service to perform an erotic dance." Is this a crime? Chafe seems unable to view the lacrosse team's hiring of a black stripper outside the "context" of his gothic portrayal of miscegenation.

Professor Tim Tyson follows suit: "The spirit of the lynch mob lived in that house on Buchanan Boulevard, regardless of the truth of the most serious charges." Translation: no matter what actually happened, the lacrosse team is guilty of ritually enacting racial-sexual violence.

After these early examples, viewing the case as intricately related to some kind of sexualized lynching became obligatory among the Group of 88. In

thought" she seems to mean empathic nodding, endless "listening," and the complete absence of criticism directed at professors. The managerial elite in this "community" would undoubtedly be none other than Wiegman, Neal, Chafe, and Baker. In this vision of the university, one's eagerness to "listen" to designated victims has become the chief means of securing status.

That the sundry statements of the Group of 88 are incoherent, illogical, and generally poorly written is beside the point. For it is through this inarticulateness that the Group seeks to stake out a position that cannot be criticized or even rationally assessed. For them, the lacrosse case was never about a possible crime but was instead an expression of an unspeakable "terror," "the spirit of the lynch mob," or a fantasy of Duke undergraduates whispering the N-word. In turn, this inarticulateness

THE GROUP SEEKS TO **STAKE OUT A POSITION THAT CANNOT BE CRITICIZED.** FOR THEM, THE LACROSSE CASE WAS NEVER ABOUT A POSSIBLE CRIME BUT WAS **INSTEAD AN EXPRESSION OF AN UNSPEAKABLE "TERROR."**

October, economics professor Stephen Baldwin penned a defense of the lacrosse team in which he claimed in jest that the Group of 88 should be "tarred and feathered." Robyn Wiegman, the Director of Women's Studies, followed form in her passionate rebuke. Without addressing the content of Baldwin's essay, Wiegman reminds us that "Being tarred and feathered is the language of lynching." It is, in fact, a much older cliché, and Baldwin did not direct his criticism toward the accuser. But this is unimportant in the world of meaningless insinuation.

As an alternative, Wiegman claims that Duke should "cultivate a community of critical thought." By "critical

affirms the utter impossibility of any actual response: the Group seeks to "cultivate a community of critical thought," expatiate white guilt or, in Professor Neal's case, "intellectually choke the living s--t out of you."

The fact that a large portion of Duke's faculty operates in this manner is as significant a problem as District Attorney Mike Nifong's misconduct and cable news's love of a good witch hunt. As is often the case, those who seek power usually have the greatest pretensions of authenticity and moral outrage. ■

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Persian Gulf of Tonkin Incident

Spoiling for another fight, the United States may try to provoke Iran.

By Leon Hadar

THE IRAQ WAR has produced many, sometimes contradictory, historical analogies, ranging from Munich to the fall of Saigon, as pundits highlight their dubious relevance to Mesopotamia.

Following President Bush's Jan. 11 speech on U.S. policy in Iraq, in which he accused Tehran of meddling and threatened to "interrupt" the flow of support to Iraqi insurgents, Sen. Chuck Hagel added a new analogy: Nixon's decision to expand the war in Vietnam into Cambodia as part of a strategy to "interrupt" the flow of support to those other insurgents, the National Liberation Front, from sanctuaries along Cambodia's eastern border.

"[O]nce you get to hot pursuit, no one can say we won't engage across border," Hagel told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during a Foreign Relations Committee hearing. "Some of us remember 1970 and Cambodia, and our government lied to us and said we didn't cross the border," he said. "When you set in motion the kind of policy the president is talking about here, it is very, very dangerous."

But Cambodia was never a regional power in Southeast Asia in the way that Iran is today. Like North Vietnam's anti-U.S. strategy in South Vietnam in the 1960s and '70s, Iran has the military power and policy influence to disrupt U.S. policies in neighboring Iraq, with the Shi'ite militias it supports playing a similar role to that of the Vietcong in South Vietnam.

Thus the correct historical analogy may not be Nixon's secret air campaign and incursions into Cambodia, but the

Tonkin Gulf incident—the alleged pair of attacks by North Vietnamese naval forces against American destroyers that President Lyndon B. Johnson used to win public support and congressional approval for escalating the confrontation with North Vietnam.

For years, the U.S. government asserted that the Americans had done nothing to provoke a naval engagement in the Tonkin Gulf. In fact, the Johnson administration argued that it acted with restraint by refusing to respond to the first attack on Aug. 2, 1964, and retaliated only after North Vietnam made a second attack two days later. But recent research, based among other things on declassified signal intercepts as well as personal recollections, suggests that the second attack probably didn't take place and that the first was provoked by covert U.S. action against North Vietnam.

According to respected military historian and Vietnam expert John Prados, the U.S. had been pursuing a program of covert naval commando attacks since January 1964 to pressure Hanoi to stop sponsoring operations in South Vietnam. Prados, who as a fellow with the National Security Archive at The George Washington University studied many declassified intercepts, White House tapes, and other documents related to the Tonkin Gulf incident, has concluded that contrary to the Johnson administration's characterization of the Tonkin Gulf incident—that an American warship simply happened to be cruising in the Gulf to exert a U.S. presence—"the naval battle between the destroyer USS Maddox and several North Vietnamese

torpedo boats occurred on August 2, 1964, in the immediate aftermath of a series of 34-A maritime raids on North Vietnamese coastal targets," including two offshore islands. When Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara briefed U.S. lawmakers on the incident, however, he asserted that the raids on North Vietnam were South Vietnamese naval missions and had nothing to do with the United States, Prados reports.

But the major challenge to the official version of the Tonkin Gulf incident has focused on another question: did a second attack on U.S. warships occur on the night of Aug. 4? In the aftermath of the naval battle of Aug. 2, President Johnson ordered a second U.S. destroyer, the *USS C. Turner Joy*, to join the *Maddox* and sail to the Gulf of Tonkin. On the night of Aug. 4, both ships reported that they were coming under attack again and sent messages reporting contacts with the enemy. It was after that alleged second attack that President Johnson ordered retaliatory bombing and asked for the congressional resolution, which passed on Aug. 7.

But the certainty of the second attack was never as clear as the first. "The supposed surface action took place at night and in poor weather," Prados recalls. "The skipper and four seamen aboard the *C. Turner Joy* variously claimed having seen a searchlight, boat cockpit lights, smoke at a location where they claimed their gunfire had hit a Vietnamese vessel in the water, and one, or perhaps two, torpedo wakes." But no physical evidence such as wreckage, bodies, or photographs from Aug. 4 were ever discovered.

Indeed, the documents and transcripts that have been released by the National Security Agency and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum tend to support the consensus among researchers that the “second attack” never happened. Retired Vietnamese Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, meeting with McNamara in 1995, categorically denied that Vietnamese gunboats attacked American destroyers on Aug. 4, while admitting to the attack on Aug. 2. Furthermore, on Oct. 31, 2005, the *New York Times* reported that according to a classified finding, NSA historian Robert J. Hanyok concluded in 2001 that North Vietnamese intercepts were falsified and evidence skewed, if not for political motives, to cover translation mistakes.

Historians will continue to debate whether policymakers were aware that intelligence reports about the incidents were incomplete—Johnson is said to have told Undersecretary of State George Ball, “Hell, those dumb, stupid sailors were just shooting at flying fish”—or whether the administration believed it was providing Congress with accurate information. What is certain, however, is that the Johnson and his advisers wanted military action against Hanoi and used the incident as a pretext to seek a resolution approving the use of force and creating legal justification for full-blown war.

Critics of the Bush administration have invoked Tonkin before, accusing the White House of citing flawed intelligence about Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction and then trying to cover-up these political and bureaucratic machinations. And as is the case with the Tonkin Gulf incident, we will probably have to wait for the declassification of government documents before we find out whether President Bush and his advisers were aware that their allegations were based on questionable evidence.

But as storm clouds gather over the Persian Gulf, those who studied the administration’s *modus operandi* in the period leading to the ouster of Saddam Hussein are wondering whether the White House is again manipulating evidence to create the conditions for a U.S. military confrontation.

The new chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV, has sharply criticized the administration’s increasingly combative stance, telling the *New York Times* that efforts to portray Iran as a growing threat are uncomfortably reminiscent of rhetoric about Iraq before the American invasion. He warned that the administration is building a case even as intelligence agencies still know little about either Iran’s internal dynamics or its intentions in the Middle East. “To be quite honest, I’m a little concerned that it’s Iraq again,” the senator said. “This whole concept of moving against Iran is bizarre.”

At the same time, the decision by the Bush administration to appoint Adm. William Fallon to oversee military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan has raised red flags among observers in Washington. Why choose a navy admiral to lead two ground wars in the Middle East and South Asia unless you are expecting an “incident” that would trigger a military confrontation with Iran? If that happened, Iran would retaliate by attacking oil platforms and tankers, closing the Strait of Hormuz, and perhaps hitting oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia; the U.S. Navy would then play a key role in protecting the oil flowing from the Persian Gulf.

The Bush administration’s decision to dispatch a second carrier group to the Persian Gulf—the *USS John C. Stennis*—to back up the *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower*, marking the first time since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 that the U.S. has had two carrier battle groups in the Gulf, raises more concern, as did President Bush’s authorization of American forces

in Iraq to pursue Iranian operatives involved in aiding insurgents.

Those like Rockefeller who suspect that the administration is gearing up for war against Iran through a campaign of disinformation could also point to recent media reports that the U.S. is investigating possible Iranian involvement in an attack that killed five American soldiers in Karbala, as well as the continuing barrage of statements by top administration officials accusing Iran of meddling in Iraq.

At the Senate confirmation hearing for his nomination to be deputy secretary of state, intelligence chief John Negroponte said, “Iran has been emboldened in its behavior during the past couple of years and has played a more assertive role and that certainly manifests itself in Iraq, where we have increasing evidence that they have been providing lethal assistance to extremist Shia groups in that country.” Like other officials, Negroponte has downplayed the notion that the U.S. is using “gun diplomacy” to deal with Iran and suggests that Washington is just trying, in the aftermath of setbacks in Iraq, to reassert its position in the Persian Gulf.

But Sen. Barack Obama warned during a hearing against drifting into hostilities with Iran: “You’ve got a policy that appears to be purposely somewhat ambiguous in terms of how the administration is going to pursue Iranians who are on Iraqi soil. This has led to grave concern on the part of many observers that we are stumbling into a more aggressive posture ...”

If the past is any guide, we may less stumble than step—while claiming to have been pushed. You say “Persian Gulf,” I say “Tonkin Gulf.” Let’s go to war. ■

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Hide and Seek with Scooter

As the Plame affair plays out in court, Americans may learn who manipulated pre-war intelligence.

By Justin Raimondo

IN A COURT OF LAW, everyone is entitled to the presumption of innocence, but there was a moment during the trial of I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby, the vice president’s former chief of staff, when this axiom was seriously shaken. It came during the cross-examination of Debbie Bonds, one of the FBI agents who had questioned Libby. She admitted, “It took a long time to get him to tell us what his first initial stood for.” Libby’s lawyer tried to make a joke of this—“He still won’t tell me,” Ted Wells quipped—but one has to wonder what the jury made of a suspect who wouldn’t come clean on such a simple matter.

His first name, by the way, is Irving.

As to why he would want to keep this—and so much else—secret is, perhaps, the key to understanding Libby, a man who, despite being one of the most powerful figures in Washington, was unknown to the general public before his indictment. As *Slate* reporter John Dickerson put it, Libby “represents the other side of the Bush administration: the secret undisclosed side. Like the vice president he works for, Libby prefers to work on policy in the shadows and leave the politics to others.” Well, yes, but that depends on what one means by “politics.”

In the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, the president and his team were front and center, serving up the case for war, while Cheney and Libby, in their shadowy kitchen, were cooking the intelligence and beating back the CIA’s efforts to throw out their recipe. An anonymous

Cheney aide told the *Washington Post* during the investigation’s early stages that the vice president’s involvement in the leaking of CIA agent Valerie Plame’s name was “‘implausible’ ... because he rarely if ever involved himself in press strategy.” Libby’s trial has shown this up as pure malarkey.

Working behind the scenes, Cheney and Libby sought to manipulate the media coverage of their war propaganda, with the vice president himself taking an active role—via Scooter—in distributing “talking points” to his underlings. As Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald has invested so much time and effort showing with a parade of witnesses—including Ari Fleischer, former White House press secretary, and Cathie Martin, former communications director for the vice president’s office—one aspect of this, amounting almost to an obsession, was the pushback against former Amb. Joseph Wilson, husband of Valerie Plame. According to the defense team, however, Wilson was just “a sliver,” a minor irritant, and didn’t merit much attention. Yet testimony reveals daily discussions about Wilson and efforts to shape a convincing response—personally directed by the vice president. On one occasion, Cheney dictated a script for Scooter to read to reporters asking about the Wilson matter, and, after doing so, the vice president’s loyal consigliere dutifully spread the news of Plame’s CIA affiliation.

Whether this was a freelancing innovation by Scooter or a deed done at the

direction of the vice president is the question hanging over this trial. And it is likely to come up, at least by implication, in Fitzgerald’s cross-examination of Cheney, if and when that comes to pass.

Washington Post columnist David Ignatius writes that what the Libby trial reveals is “a failed cover up”—but what did Libby and Cheney have to hide? What’s being covered up here—albeit not for long—looks very much like the deliberate falsification of the “intelligence” that sparked the Iraq War. The office of the vice president was the headquarters of this campaign, which led to the outing of a CIA agent. Cheney’s consistent involvement in the day-to-day details of the cover-up is potentially the most explosive issue to come out of Libby’s trial.

It all started in the early months of 2002, when the vice president received uncorroborated reports that the Iraqis were trying to buy uranium from the African nation Niger. Cheney made inquiries to the CIA, and they duly investigated. Langley was skeptical; the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon’s own spook factory, was more enthusiastic about the allegations, and the Niger uranium issue became a major bone of contention between the CIA and the neoconservatives within the administration who were pushing for war. A heated intra-bureaucratic battle ensued, with the CIA debunking the Niger uranium “intelligence” and the vice president’s office energetically defending it. George Tenet, then CIA director, person-

ally intervened to get the “talking points” removed from the president’s public utterances, but the persistent efforts of the War Party paid off: in his 2003 State of the Union address, Bush stated unequivocally that the Iraqis had tried to procure yellowcake uranium from “an African nation,” citing the British as the source.

The real source, however, was a cache of dubious documents that had been obtained from an Italian wheeler-dealer named Rocco Martino, sanitized by SISMI, the Italian intelligence service, and stovepiped to Washington. These documents piqued the vice president’s interest—he was, after all, always on the lookout for fresh evidence of Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction—and so Joe Wilson was sent to Niger, where he found zero evidence that Iraq had obtained yellowcake from this source. When Wilson heard the president utter those infamous “16 words,” he went public with his first-hand knowledge that the Niger uranium charges were bogus.

Also bogus, as it turned out, were the documents that started it all: when the International Atomic Energy Agency obtained the originals, it took only a few hours to determine that they were crude forgeries.

Who was to blame for the “mistake”? All indications point to the office of the vice president. Cheney and Libby claim never to have received Wilson’s report or any indication that the CIA questioned the authenticity of the Niger uranium “intelligence.” But one of the benefits of the Libby trial is that previously classified documents have been dumped into the public domain. Notable among them is a CIA memo dated June 9, 2003, which shows that the Agency published a Senior Power Executive Intelligence Brief on Feb. 14, 2002, casting serious doubt on the alleged Niger-Iraq deal. Cheney certainly saw this brief, yet he

and Scooter continued to push the Niger story.

This is about much more than a cover up—the issue is nothing less than the integrity of the U.S. intelligence-gathering process. Cheney and Scooter reportedly made many trips to Langley, pressuring senior analysts into drawing the “right” conclusions about Iraq’s WMD and especially Saddam’s alleged nuclear program. Yet the Niger uranium affair suggests more than mere meddling. It originated, after all, in forged documents. Someone was trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the Americans. Did that someone include the vice president?

However these fakes crept into the U.S. intelligence stream and ended up being cited by the president, the perpetrators would be sure to go after Wilson,

to discredit the leading critic of this line, Joe Wilson, and 3) Libby lied when he told a grand jury that he had heard of Plame’s CIA connection from journalists. On this last point, seven individuals—a former undersecretary of state, the former No. 3 official at the CIA, Cheney’s former spokeswoman, Libby’s daily CIA briefer, a former White House press secretary, and two prominent journalists—have all testified that Libby told them about Plame’s employment at the CIA before he spoke to Tim Russert, whom he originally claimed was his source. The Libby defense—that he forgot all these conversations and heard about Plame’s job “as if for the first time” from Russert—is absolutely unbelievable. (He later recollected, under FBI questioning, that “he first learned of Plame from the Vice President.”)

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whose *New York Times* op-ed shined the spotlight on a dark corner of the intelligence-gathering process. They would have found it necessary to discredit Wilson and close off any public inquiry into how the Niger allegations were—or were not—verified. Outing Wilson’s wife was part of the game plan: the idea was to not only tar him with nepotism but to intimidate anyone else from coming forward with damning evidence of faked intelligence.

In lifting this rock, Fitzgerald has exposed a nest of normally nocturnal creatures who cannot long survive the light. A parade of prosecution witnesses and declassified documents have proved 1) the administration was warned about tall tales of deals between Iraq and Niger’s closely-monitored uranium consortium, 2) the vice president’s office, with Libby leading the charge, was out

In announcing Libby’s indictment, Fitzgerald said, “If you saw a baseball game and you saw a pitcher wind up and throw a fastball and hit a batter right smack in the head, and it really, really hurt them, you’d want to know why the pitcher did that.” Libby was charged not with outing Plame but with lying to the grand jury because “What we have when someone charges obstruction of justice, the umpire gets sand thrown in his eyes. He’s trying to figure what happened and somebody blocked their view.”

The umpire’s view has been at least partially unblocked by the Libby trial. Whether this new clarity brings more indictments, and a further probe into the Niger uranium fiasco, remains to be seen—but the possibility looms. ■

Justin Raimondo is editorial director of Antiwar.com.

Suburban Peaceniks

The antiwar movement is leaving the far Left behind in pursuit of mainstream appeal.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

ERICA IS NOT PLEASED with this antiwar demonstration. Gesturing to some other activists a few yards away she asks, "Dance for peace? What is that?" Her full cheeks were made for pouting, but she is trying to express something like outrage. A self-described Trotskyite studying at (where else?) City College in New York, Erica can see that her comrades have been pushed aside. I direct her attention to the hammer and sickle hand-painted onto a red flag behind her, and for a few moments we discuss the status of "deformed workers' states" and the theories of Antonio Gramsci. Small talk. But her disappointment is impossible to conceal. She and the other members of the League for the Fourth International are packing up. "I've never seen a demonstration like this," she declaims. She struggles to find the words, "It's so ... so ... middle class."

Early that bright Saturday morning, the "middle class" filled the D.C. commuter trains carrying homemade signs. Accountants and middle managers wearing windbreakers and tennis shoes shared stickers and pins that said "Drop Bush, Not Bombs." When they climbed out of the subway near the Smithsonian, they were greeted by a half dozen young people brandishing black banners with SDS. scrawled in red. The newly re-formed radical student group was preparing for "direct action," but before they could put on their black bandanas and take to the streets, they had to find each other in a swell of suburban Democrats chatting about Jim Webb.

Assembling the diverse coalition for this "peace surge" on the National Mall had its own politics. In the map drawn by the organizing group, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), religious and faith-based groups were stationed directly to the left of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender anti-warriors. Tolerance in action. When one Baptist minister spoke to the gathering throng, two women wrapped in gay-pride flags and peace symbols giggled and quietly chanted a call "Bigots?" and response "Against War!"

Directly behind both groups was CODEPINK—an organization of feminists who oppose war and patriarchy. Their campaign for the day was cheekily named "Pull Out Now," a slogan emblazoned on pink foam tiaras and later chanted over the loudspeakers much to the delight of the audio crew sent by conservative radio-talker Laura Ingraham, who played it throughout the following week.

But while Ingraham's radio show reveled in sound clips of her producers asking demonstrators where they could join the Communist Party, the speakers on bill were content to serve red-meat rhetoric to a mostly blue crowd. Referring to the Democratic Congress, Susan Schaer of Women's Action for New Directions announced, "They are the deciders, not [Bush]. They are the commanders. Now, it is up to them to make the change. ... We have to be there behind them, every step of the way. Some nonbinding resolution is good, but it's not enough. ... We can do it. We did

it in November, we can do it next year."

Previously, most of the major antiwar demonstrations were co-sponsored with UFPJ by International A.N.S.W.E.R., an outfit formed by Ramsey Clark and captained by the sectarian Left, drawing many of its leaders from the Workers World Party—a radical group distinguished in history by its support for the Soviet invasions in Hungary and Afghanistan. Previous antiwar demonstrations in 2003 and 2005 featured speakers defending the gains of "the revolution" in Cuba, North Korea, and Venezuela. UFPJ severed their relationships with A.N.S.W.E.R. following the September 2005 demonstration in which A.N.S.W.E.R. speakers consistently went over their allotted time while C-SPAN cameras were rolling. A.N.S.W.E.R. "presented a one-sided picture of the antiwar movement to the U.S. public," according to a statement issued by UFPJ in December 2005.

A.N.S.W.E.R. still made an appearance at the rally, holding aloft their signs and trading on their reputation. Unfortunately for them, they stood near the Hip Hop Caucus, a new group that claims to set an agenda for the hip-hop community. Wearing crisp red t-shirts that implored, "Make Hip Hop, Not War" the members enthusiastically spent their time dancing, beat-boxing, and rapping about politics regardless of what was happening on stage. The doctrines of Marxist Leninism just couldn't attract a crowd when compared to the infectious energy of schoolyard rap.

At midday, to the enthusiastic cheers

of the suburbanites, Congressman Dennis Kucinich climbed the stage to announce that his plan for ending the war in Iraq was available to the public. "Go to Kucinich.us," he implored the crowd. "The money is in the pipeline to bring our troops home," he declared before working himself into an evangelical fervor, exhorting this diverse congregation to unite the work of "our hands, our hearts and our intelligence ... to create a new world." As "Kucinich 2008" signs were lifted high, he repeated the phrase "new world" nearly a dozen times in one minute.

By lunchtime, the crowd was pressed in hard and the physical separation between the groups had evaporated. Only some of the largest organizations that form UFPJ could be distinguished from one another. In one corner were hundreds of labor activists carrying signs for the SEIU, and next to them, a sizeable contingent from NOW. Despite claiming over 1,000 member groups from across the political spectrum—including a variety of socialist parties and religious groups like Pax Christi—the backbone of the antiwar movement aligns substantially with what Howard Dean memorably called "the Democratic wing of the Democratic party."

Some demonstrators paid stylistic homage to the 1960s, hand-painting peace signs on their cheeks or wearing tie-dyed shirts. Without exception, those doing so were over 40 and causing some minor embarrassment to the young anti-warriors. When a reggae-tinged protest song came on, a married couple enjoying the avoirdupois of middle-age, heedless of rhythm, began to swing and bump their hips into each other. "No one wants to see that," spat a disgusted colleague. One other nod to the 1960s: wherever the crowd was tight, the whiff of cannabis hung over it. Picking up the scent, a gray-haired matron commented, "What a throwback."

Almost on cue, Jane Fonda ascended the dais to break her 34-year self-imposed exile from the politics of war. "Silence is no longer an option," she intoned. Presenting her daughter and grandchildren, Fonda spoke about her generation not fulfilling the promise of Vietnam-era dissent. The other silver-screen stars didn't embarrass themselves too much, having learned message discipline. Susan Sarandon spent her face time urging the crowd to support the troops when they get home, to counter any cuts in their benefits, and to be outraged at a doctor/patient ratio of 1 to 500 for returning soldiers. Tim Robbins ginned up cheers by announcing, "Karl Rove has just been subpoenaed!" One legal eagle in the crowd murmured that a subpoena isn't nearly as exciting as an indictment but cheered anyway. Robbins then mustered his dramatic skill for a jeremiad based on the Ten Commandments. "Bush listens to God, but it is not a god I recognize," he howled. Robbins indicted Bush for bear-

and uploaded to YouTube.com within the afternoon, preferring instead to wrestle a few to the ground and shoo away others. The despoiled steps were cleaned within hours.

Just as previous antiwar demonstrations featured a cast onstage more radical than the crowd, it was difficult this Jan. 25 to find any Republicans marching against the surge, despite a recent AP poll that shows only 42 percent of registered GOP voters support the president's policy. UFPJ claims to not be a "single issue" organization and so gives permission to its representatives to tie the antiwar message to broad calls for social justice. Several speakers throughout the day demanded that the money spent on war be spent on national health care or on achieving social justice throughout the world. While coming a long way from its previous odes to Hugo Chavez, the antiwar movement has not tapped the entirety of antiwar sentiment. It's middle-class, but at its roots it remains an almost exclusively Democratic phenomenon.

EVERYWHERE SHE LOOKED, HER MOVEMENT WAS BEING CO-OPTED.

ing false witness, for stealing the money of American taxpayers and the resources of the Iraqis, and for his culpability in the deaths of American soldiers and Iraqi civilians. Robbins demanded that Democrats put impeachment on the table—welcome words to the multitude gathered at the mall. It was this speech that prepared the crowd to march in front of the empty Capitol.

As the protest music signaled the order to march, the black bandana brigade of SDS raced into the streets and toward the Capitol, courting confrontation with the police by spray-painting anarchist symbols and the words "this is our Capital" on the steps. Seeing the ruse, the police avoided any harsh tactics that could be videotaped

As she packed up, my Trotskyite acquaintance, Erica, complained that City College, like the antiwar movement she saw today, was "turning its back on its radical past." Everywhere she looked, her movement was being co-opted by the mainstream. She offered me a copy of *The Internationalist*, a publication that insists the only antiwar movement that ever succeeded in defeating an imperial war was the Bolshevik Revolution. "Just one dollar," she assured me.

"No cash. I just have a debit card," I bargained.

She handed me a copy anyway. "You need it," she quipped. She is a believer who practices what she preaches: to each according to his need. ■

The Fall of Modernity

Has the American narrative authored its own undoing?

By Michael Vlahos

WE ARE LOSING OUR WARS in the Muslim world because our vision of history is at odds with reality. This is a well-established condition of successful societies, a condition that inevitably grows more worrisome with time and continuing success. In fact, what empires have most in common is how their sacred narratives come to rule their strategic behavior—and rule it badly. In America's case, our war narrative works against us to promote our deepest fear: the end of modernity.

A nation's evolving storyline gives concrete form to an accumulation of success and translates this into an assurance of transcendence. Those that claim to be the grandest societies in their own world inevitably style themselves as empires, not simply as large kingship domains exalted by good fortune but as regnant successors to a universal ideal. Thus the Ottoman vision as successor to the Roman Empire of Justinian, and of the contemporary Hapsburgs as the true heirs of the Western Roman Empire. Thus also Louis XIV, so too the Czars, as sons of Byzantium. This self-styling grows into a collective conviction that the once-national, now-imperial, soon-to-be-universal narrative is not only an inevitable story but is actually coterminous with history itself.

Later, when threats seem to come out of nowhere, society is surprised, affronted, and deeply apprehensive because the presence of such threats symbolically suggests that the narrative might be false. All threats are then mortal threats—not because they put at

risk the viability of the society itself but because they threaten the sacred symbolism of history that has become inseparable from national identity. They are a chilling announcement that the story is about to meet a bad end, or worse—be replaced by someone else's story.

Empires in their later stages therefore see threats not only as physical but also as symbolic, and the symbolic threat is always the more important, for it represents existential value—identity itself—and requires a necessarily existential response. It is not simply the actual threat that must be countered: the experience of meeting the threat must reclaim the divine certainty of the imperial narrative for all to see.

When such attacks come, they come for a reason. Their very existence reveals that the imperial-sacred narrative has become a war objective in its own right. Indeed, because the narrative has become enshrined as a sort of national tabernacle, successfully attacking it can reap as many rewards for an enemy in terms of authority as any material gains.

The imperial narrative of the grand nation thus becomes its double-edged sword. In day-to-day politics, its celebration reminds the people of their strength and unity. Even more important for external imperial relations, narrative becomes the badge of legitimacy as lead nation.

But the imperial narrative also makes the grand nation vulnerable to symbolic attack, a weak strategic position because the empire must maintain not only its material interests but also the

perfect integrity of the tabernacle—and as a symbolic edifice, the imperial narrative is brittle and relatively easy to attack. Moreover, if it is attacked successfully, regaining lost authority requires disproportionate effort so great as to risk being self-defeating. Even empires that are truly decadent and surely should know better—for whom even the smallest shock might unleash an historical avalanche—have put defense of the narrative above reality. Both Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans did just that in 1914.

Empires that come to identify themselves with the universal, whose stories are indistinguishable from grandeur and the hopes of humankind, cannot separate from sacred story without destroying themselves. So, even weak and failed, they must fight as if they were still grand. What choice do they have?

The United States, in contrast to Austria-Hungary or the Ottomans, still cherishes the freshness of its claim as the world's young hope. Indeed, in 2001, we were not simply the world nation: we were the "hyperpower."

Thus the 9/11 attacks were a frontal assault on the American narrative. They were instinctively compared to Pearl Harbor, but we were not the same innocent nation in 2001 that we were in 1941, seemingly minding our own business. In the intervening 60 years, we had built a position that in its narrative splendor was a true world empire. Some even announced that we had triumphantly ended history on our terms. Henceforth only American values reigned.

The attacks were not simply a violation of the national person—as in 1941—but an affront to all that was right and true. Yet its emotional symbolism had a darker side too—the suggestion, felt but unvoiced by Americans, that the attacks were the first black sign of The Fall of the City, the beginning of the end of the American sacred narrative.

Simple retribution would not be enough. We had to utterly destroy the prophecy couched in 9/11 and reassert American predestination.

This grand symbolic response—re-establishing our dignitas and reclaiming history—had to be a Great War narrative. It had to mirror, and in critical ways surpass, the mythic passage of World War II. That war reified the narrative tabernacle, but this war had an even greater charge: the divine final fulfillment of America's world mission.

So we are, as our own government tells us, in a war of civilizations—a national testing in which we will emerge triumphant, the true beacon and best hope of humankind or else find ourselves destroyed, the detritus of history. This is not simply inflated rhetoric. It is avowed American policy.

In the president's own words, it is nothing less than “the unfolding of a global ideological struggle, our time in history,” pitting “progress” and “freedom” against a “mortal danger to all humanity,” the “enemy of civilization.” Moreover, “the call of history has come to the right country,” and “the defense of freedom is worth the sacrifice.” Ultimately the “evil ones” will be destroyed, and “this great country will lead the world to safety, security, and peace,” a millennial world where “free peoples will own the future.”

Here inevitably, rather than reflecting actual conditions, it is more important for reality to fit the sacred narrative. So for nearly four years, it has been “the Iraqi people” vs. “the killers,” or more

broadly in the world of Islam, “good moderate Muslims” vs. “evil.”

Does it matter whether we pursue grand drama for wholly narcissistic reasons, as long as we win? What if we don't? Failure might lead to the collapse of friendly tyrannies like Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia or even to economic crisis and an expansion of the war. Longstanding alliances could come apart. But even then our military power, our vast economy, and the strength of the American people would still be intact. Strategic recovery should still be possible. The old narrative might be in tatters, but that might turn out to be a good thing because we could then build a more modest national story.

Such recovery is foreclosed, however, in a script of civilization and its enemies. Not only did American leaders go for the existential War of History instead of dealing with reality, they chose the worst possible dramatic vehicle for restaging the national passion play. For what we are experiencing is no war of civilizations. It is not even a war.

SIMPLE RETRIBUTION WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH. WE HAD TO UTTERLY DESTROY THE PROPHECY COUCHED IN 9/11.

Because the national narrative is a sacred retelling of God's message and His American mission, its periodic restaging always assumes the form of a great war—revolution, civil war, world war. But after 9/11, there was no great war to be had, so we created a simulacrum. Up to a point, we might keep it looking like a war. But at last it will not perform for us. It cannot support the demands of the drama we require. What we needed was a grand yet simple story with easy enemies and a ringing ending called victory. But our drama has shifted from a war into an uncontrol-

lable force accelerating larger world transformations.

The “war” is revealing the distant contours of the end of modernity.

Modernity is the world we made for ourselves after 1941, built atop the world of European modernity, much like the ancient Romans built their international system on an earlier Hellenistic world. When we invoke modernity, it is the equivalent of antiquity saying Romanitas. The word sweeps up in its arms an entire civilized way of life: a literary and scientific canon, a political philosophy, a temple city of institutions, a complete identity.

Moreover, modernity is not simply a generalized Western vision of modern life. It is the old Romanitas reborn. Progress and prosperity, enterprise and free markets, even human freedom—humanity's best and only possibility.

Yet it is precisely this possibility, through this war, that has begun to subside.

American modernity will continue to dominate world culture and affairs for some time to come. It will yet hold even

as it slows down. And its passing, if ever finally marked, will like Rome's seem more a transformation than a collapse, more like continuity than calamity. What we see today is the beginning of its subsidence only. In metaphorical terms, think early Late Antiquity. After all, Romans at the beginning of the 3rd century still had several imperial centuries to go.

But can this whole claim be serious? Modernity, globalization, and an American world are still inevitable, are they not? Cold War victory made modernity seem unstoppable. A united Europe, a reforming Russia, and the free-market

modernization of China and India meant that America's cause had become humanity's cause.

In the 1990s, some argued that modernity was failing whole sectors of humanity. But even critics of globalization saw this as a problem of limits, disinterest, and resistance. Certainly the enterprise reached some natural boundaries. The wretched of the earth could not be instantly accommodated and uplifted. Moreover, Americans were disengaged. Desperate margins persisted in part because we ultimately cared so little for the diehards and holdouts against history living there.

Then those "dead-enders" shook globalization's storyline to its very core. 9/11 rattled our faith in modernity. "Draining the swamps" was to right forever the errors of the 1990s. But this grand drama has accomplished the opposite: it has weakened American modernity and puts its future at risk, in three ways.

First, the American war narrative rejects modernity's future constituents: its message is that we are foreclosing on them. We do this knowing that American modernity cannot long survive repossessing its promise of a universal vision for humankind.

Second, American modernity loses authority because our war promotes alternative and resistant communities. Demonizing them elevates them, and their new stature creates competing alternatives to modernity.

Third, the American war narrative shows modernity helpless in its own defense. Military failure becomes a literal stripping of our world authority, actually pushing the global future away from us.

"The Promise of American Life" flung out to the world was to be a future of universal human redemption and transcendence. Americans might argue bitterly over how to achieve this, but before the war there was no argument over the desirability of the goal.

Now two-thirds of humanity is moving away from us and from our vision of one world. While sleek Tom Friedman rhapsodizes new Silicon Valleys like Bangalore, in *Planet of Slums* Mike Davis writes, "Half of Bangalore's population lacks piped water, much less cappuccino, and there are more ragpickers and street children (90,000) than software geeks (about 60,000). In an archipelago of 10 slums, researchers found only 19 latrines for 102,000 residents."

Universal integration is no longer the human prospect but a black split

anoint, all Islamists and their communities are declared evil radicals. And if hundreds of millions so sympathize, then truthfully, is not the dark side the entire Muslim world? To make sure the point is not missed, war commentators are quick to add that Islam's civilization is decayed and failed.

But this is no simple fight with the Muslim world and Islamic civilization. This is a global war, and the very survival of our civilization is at stake. Us versus them is not Americans versus Muslims but civilization and its enemies.

RATHER THAN AN AMERICAN STORY OF GLOBAL DELIVERANCE AND REDEMPTION, THIS WAR SUBSTITUTES ITS OWN STORY OF GOOD AGAINST EVIL.

between "us" and a "surplus humanity." Globalization has become the privilege of those lucky few billions in the formal labor market. But what about the other half on their way to becoming the other two-thirds? What happens to our universal redemptive narrative in a world where modernity ends forever at 40 percent of humanity?

Even during the "slow globalization" 1990s, the story was being rewritten. Robert Kaplan's *The Coming Anarchy* helped steer us there. Repelled and horrified by his descriptions of Abidjan and Conakry, the message readers took back was: to survive, keep them all as far away as possible. No human redemption, just human consignment.

We were prepped during those years for the answer this war narrative now gives us: redefine humanity. The world of the left behind is the seedbed of the dark side—from drug lords and terrorists to medieval religious fanatics.

The Great Muslim War advances this transformation. They say that the dark side is only evil radicals—and their supporters. But listen closely: except for the tiny handful of "moderate Muslims" we

Thus our transfigured narrative can keep its titular universalism as it expands the enemy "other" beyond ragtag Takfiris to something really big: the Demiurge, the great Evil. If we are civilization, then the full enemy, in our unspoken logic, is the entire amniotic sea of dark humanity birthing and suckering attackers. Universalism is bent to the service of grand struggle.

The Great Muslim War replaces the story of globalization without formally discarding it. This is metamorphosis by association, linking what is wretched with what is evil, transfigured from those lost to modernity to the very enemies of modernity. The world's left behind morph from our moral responsibility into dark forces we must subdue. Rather than an American story of global deliverance and redemption, this war substitutes its own story of good against evil, of civilization against the night. Instead of us reaching to the ends of the earth with the promise of American life, our promise is contingent on submission: "You are either with us or against us."

This is promoting strong counter-movements among "the global other."

Alternative communities are everywhere, and to us they are the very picture of illegitimacy, deviance, and criminality. There are, for example, 100,000 gang members in El Salvador and Honduras and entire states in Brazil and Mexico ruled by drug lords. In Brazil's cities, perhaps 20 percent of the municipal core is beyond government control.

Now spread this Latin landscape to the whole world. To Somalia, where Islamic courts bring some kind of order out of chaos. To the Brotherhood in Egypt, where Islamists offer the only real social services people will ever know, in the face of a ruling class as corrupt as any since late antiquity. To Waziristan, Baluchistan, the Muslim parts of Thailand, the Moros, Chechnya, Aceh, and the Tamils. Even to Hamas and Hezbollah.

Our clinical term is "non-state actor," living in a world of "ungoverned areas"—as though their local governance is "unrule," their living communities "unsocieties." They are merely human black holes to be mopped up and shut down. We see only our labels of cool acronym and hot "terrorist."

Superficially this may look a bit like Cold War days, when every "liberation movement" set off "communist" klaxons. But this is not then. Back then, the dark force was the Soviet Union, Third World seducer.

The real Cold War analogy is in the Soviet metaphor itself. Thus the "Islamofascist" threat equals the Soviet threat, requiring an equivalent struggle. But unlike the Cold War, our survival now depends not on deterrence but literally on destruction.

This story has remarkable implications for alternative communities. Our Islamofascist branding makes every movement of Muslim resistance an attack on us. Yet most resistance instead speaks to local yearnings. By seeing an enemy of civilization in every Muslim non-state actor, we

unthinkingly widen the struggle. Alternative communities are indelible in the "evil" world landscape painted by the global war on terrorism—the ongoing metamorphosis of the global other into the Mordor of our imagination.

Then there are meta-communities of piety. Modernity's greatest failure is spiritual—neon-lit in Europe, where old piety has crashed and burned. But among the global other scorched by modernity's "creative destruction," it is not that people have abandoned piety but that it has abandoned them. In globalization's mixing bowl, the meditative power of old ethos has been lost. Yet American modernity offers nothing to take its place: just ask an Afghani or an Iraqi.

Piety is a cry for meaning in a stripped world. Two movements stand out: the Pentecostalist and the Islamist. Both share a deep repudiation of the Western nation state as the supreme human ideal—not because they are intrinsically anti-Western but because they see modernity as antithetical to what people need. If this seems harsh, just feel the fervor and the fulfillment they offer.

Calling them throwbacks from a primitive past denies what we need to see: that modernity itself has been stripping, not giving. Denial robs us of insight into what people need, while calling their piety "primitive" encourages us to see the global other as a lesser humanity. We have after all declared that the lowest bar we will accept for Muslims is "moderate Islam," where we will ratify what is correct.

Like American modernity, Romans also presided over a humanity left behind, a welter of cults jostling in the social and spiritual vacuum. Romans also proscribed resister cults, defining Christians the way we define terrorists—as threats to civilization. Yet then, as now, the spiritual alternatives people sought could not be controlled. The great success stories then were Christianity and

Islam. Today's evangelists reach back to their passionate origins: the martyrs of the early Church and Al Ansar, the brotherhood of Muhammad. We fear to face the passionate fusion of alternative community and transcendental faith because the prospect of true meta-communities of piety leverages and multiplies the energies of local resistance.

In modernity's youth, those who resisted simply ended up as notches on history's belt, the fate of all who stand in the way of progress. What is different today is that resistance grows everywhere in the face of modernity's "power." They are fighters—and they know how to beat us. Ideas, visions, and sacrifice meant nothing in the Victorian face of the Maxim gun, but our grand war narrative has endowed a counter-narrative of resistance.

The Great Muslim War showcases this achievement, creating dramatic stagings that we cannot win and that paradoxically become the gift of transcendence to our enemy. Witness Iraq, Afghanistan, and Southern Lebanon. Botched stagings pressure local tyrant allies—Saudi princes, Pakistani generals, and Egyptian pharaohs. We find ourselves scrambling to prop them up, visibly giving the lie to our public values. Remarkably, our war story makes its sacred centerpiece—modernity—look backward and repressive.

We declare that "resistance is futile," yet the opposite is true. The bigger we make the enemy, the bigger they become. Ours is the complicity of backhand legitimization. Whether we admit this or shout the reverse, effectively our war narrative works to set up super-power defeat—even if at first it seems only a drama of defeat played out in the media—because with one stroke, our narrative itself will have become a lie. This is doubly destructive. Not only do we fail myth—what are we? the D-list to the Greatest Generation—but myth is

no longer there for us. World War II cannot save us because according to the strictures of our own myth, we are no longer worthy of being saved.

The bell toll for modernity is victorious resistance through New War. Our enforcers have other ways of describing it: irregular war, asymmetrical war, unconventional war, guerilla war, fourth-generation war, anti-terrorism, counter-insurgency. But what do these filtered images tell us about ourselves? This is underhanded war, dirty war, war with those beneath us.

This is an interesting problem. We want to fight a clean war with those like us. On the other hand, while we pursue the war we like, the other pursues the war that promises survival and transcendence. Clausewitz himself ratified New War's power. He said that strategy at its most existential "is the use of the engagement for the purposes of the war."

The unrecognized armed community seeks to use "the engagement" for its desperate purposes: survival and then realization—to be independent.

This makes engagement with an unrecognized armed community fundamentally different from battle with another nation state, which is all about negotiating relative advantage within the context of an already well-established relationship. But as we avoid relationships with unrecognized armed communities, we deny their right to exist. This puts us in a difficult position because as we deny them, we unite them. They fight with every fiber, and for us to win, we must be Roman in our ruthlessness. But we are unwilling to kill on that scale. Before we even enter into combat, we are weaker and they are stronger.

Our war is about attacking the objects that define enemy forces with things that go boom. Their war is about their people achieving authority and turning it into legitimacy. Making the war about their goals weakens us.

War is where the people are, and our "engagement space" is where the people are not: the battlefield where armies and their weapons fight. Their engagement space is the heart of their inmost community. The whole people are the fight, so we are forced to fight them all. Not all are armed, but all are participants.

Our weapons are sacred things anointed by holy technology. In contrast, they are their weapons. In a city, our weapons cannot be used to full effect because they cannot be used indiscriminately against people. Their human metaphor focuses on the fighter, using all at hand for the fight. Hence the consistently adaptable effectiveness of his IED. The ultimate people-weapon is the suicide bomber, and the martyr-bomb is smarter than any U.S. technology. Unrelenting suicide attacks claim authority within their engagement space over an enemy whose first consideration is "force protection."

They will not fight on our terms, they will not fight in our engagement space, and our weapons are ineffective against them. Yet we deny that the enemy dictates the terms of battle. We tell ourselves that we are "taking the battle to the enemy," but we are really giving the enemy a path to victory.

Killing them boosts their cause. "Shock and awe" creates an instant transcendental experience for resistant communities—their own London Blitz. Shared sacrifice is a mythic passage of becoming: the way through blood war to a new and triumphant collective identity, as though the energy we lavish on them flows into them.

Fighting the Great State is a path to legitimacy. Surviving is not only winning, it is rising and being transformed. The Great One you fight raises you up and speaks your name to the world. We are midwives. Our efforts help birth a future that works against us.

The United States is actively dismantling its own paradigm of modernity. Someday we may understand what has been lost, but now we unconsciously celebrate our passing. Forever War makes the fall perversely satisfying as it becomes more necessary than modernity.

We have forced a fateful transformation of our sacred narrative. America is now tasked with bringing the dark side to submission. But of course we have neither the means nor the will to do so. The Great Muslim War will keep us locked in, so the more we thrash within our story, the more we will undo ourselves. Our narrative has blocked every exit. Escape officially equals retreat, and retreat equals utter defeat. We must never quit the fight—meaning we remain willing participants to our final fall.

This is our defeat-dynamic: We have set up non-state triumph in Iraq, no matter when or how we leave it. We have ensured the eventual collapse of our *ancien regime* nation-states. We have no relationship with revolutionary communities that will succeed them.

Tragically, the transformation of the American narrative is no simple, awful misstep. It is no neocon excursion that simply needs to be recalled, at which point a sound course will set things right. We created our inescapable struggle with Islam—and the world's awareness is unraveling American modernity, whose existence always depended on its confident future. This is finished.

Years may pass before this becomes clear. So cries for a rejuvenated liberal internationalism will shout down their own irrelevance. They will get all the air-time they want in the national conversation because they are performing an essential service. They reassure national elites that our historical disaster can be reversed by a stroke of policy. But over time, the oratory will wear so thin that reality will at last be naked: our universal story is now chaff to the wind like

the grand narratives of all empires.

America's destruction of Iraq and Afghanistan mobilized the Muslim world against us, but more than that it put the global other on notice. For much of the West and most of Islam, the lie of modernity as American altruism is dying in Iraq. Americans care about the death of their soldiers but barely a whit for the destruction of a society wrought in the name of "democracy."

Our future now veers wildly from the Cold War's end, when our sacred narrative touched fulfillment. We thought we were moments from finishing the Lord's work. Now the Lord's work is killing Islamists.

A great nation continues to marshal its collective power, but it will face a changed world. There will still be grand nations like China, India, and others. The United States survives, in material terms greater than ever. But its war narrative has helped to birth a changed world and to cast off its claim to the universal. There will also be a weltering of new human combinations and re-combinations.

The subsiding of modernity may be liberating. Freed from the world center, we might find a safer place to survey an evolving humanity. No longer the object of all attack, we might productively rethink our national purpose. Old modernity's institutions and practices will be folded into, and thus partly lost within, a new world-cultural mix. This may not be our preferred outcome. But losing our claim to the universal opens the way to new realities. We might take comfort that American modernity will be a part of them.

We might take comfort too in being history's greatest midwife to change, if also to our own undoing. ■

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A special group at the CIA's Counter Terrorism Center, very similar to the group that tracked the activity of al-Qaeda through the 1990s, has been working on the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah over the past three years.

In the wake of the failed Israeli incursion into Lebanon last summer, the White House asked these Hezbollah analysts to provide a comprehensive assessment of the organization, its tactics, and its leaders. A team of analysts headed by an experienced senior officer completed the report over a month ago and concluded, surprisingly, that Hezbollah is actually a collection of diverse interest groups, and its leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, far from being a fanatic controlled by Tehran, is a fairly nuanced and astute politician who has maintained his independence from the Mullahs. It also indicated that Hezbollah's threat to American interests has been seriously overstated. The report recommended that the U.S. government make an effort to establish a dialogue with Nasrallah in an attempt to moderate his organization's more extreme policies; it suggested strongly that Nasrallah would likely be receptive to such an approach. The more politically sensitized senior managers of the CIA analytical division took one look at the report, were shocked by its conclusions, and sent it back to the Counter Terrorism Center for reconsideration and redrafting in a form that would be more politically acceptable to the White House.



Reports that an Iranian scientist working on Iran's nuclear program has been assassinated by the Israeli intelligence service, Mossad, appear to be the latest in a series of deliberate fabrications.

Ardeschire Hassanpour, who died on Jan. 15, was an award-winning and internationally known scientist who worked at a plant in Isfahan where uranium hexafluoride gas is produced. The gas is used in the centrifuge-based enrichment process to generate nuclear fuel for the main Iranian research center at Natanz, and initial reports suggested that Hassanpour had died of "gas poisoning," though the Iranian authorities did not hint of any unusual circumstances or foul play. Hassanpour's death was first reported without additional comment by Prague-based *Radio Farda*, which broadcasts in Farsi into Iran and is funded by the U.S. Department of State. It was subsequently reported by the U.S.-based private information service Straffor, which has close ties to Israeli intelligence and suggested that the Mossad was possibly involved. The story was then picked up and further relayed by Rupert Murdoch's *Times of London*, which has often served as an outlet for Israeli disinformation and has also been reporting very alarming but usually erroneous information about Iran. Several U.S. intelligence sources believe that the Israelis have only limited intelligence capabilities inside Iran and that the story of Hassanpour's assassination is, in fact, a fabrication produced by Mossad to frighten Iranian scientists working on Iran's nuclear program, making them worry that they might be assassinated next. Hassanpour is certainly dead, but he most likely died in an accident, not because he was targeted and killed.

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Arts & Letters

FILM

[*The Last King of Scotland*]

A King Without a Kilt

By Steve Sailer

THE HOTTEST TREND on the London stage has been political drama offering fictionalized surmises about recent matters of state. Now playwright Peter Morgan's two fly-on-the-wall historical screenplays have brought this genre to the Oscar races, with Helen Mirren and Forrest Whitaker winning most of the early acting awards for, respectively, "The Queen" and "The Last King of Scotland."

Whitaker first made his mark in a brief scene in Martin Scorsese's 1986 pool shark movie, "The Color of Money," as a gentle giant who out-hustles (and out-acts) Paul Newman and Tom Cruise. He later starred as doomed saxophonist Charlie Parker in Clint Eastwood's "Bird" and directed the hit "Waiting to Exhale" but has been largely relegated to supporting roles too small for him.

The superstars who emerged in the 1930s, such as John Wayne, Jimmy Stewart, Gary Cooper, Cary Grant, and Clark Gable, tended to be imposing six-footers (when that was an unusual height). Yet even though the average American has gotten taller and fatter, leading men, such as Cruise, are now typically energetic little welterweights.

Whitaker finally enjoys a suitably beefy role in "Last King of Scotland" as

the 1970s Ugandan dictator with the sur-realist name, Idi Amin Dada. At a self-proclaimed 6'2" and 220 pounds, Whitaker is still smaller than the real Amin, who was the most entertaining of all the monsters of the 20th century, a megalomaniacal cross between Joseph Stalin and Muhammad Ali. Sure, Idi was a semiliterate cannibal, but he was a likeable one.

Amin reveled in such self-bestowed titles as Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Sea and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular. An admirer of his former Scottish officers in the King's African Rifles—"I love *everything* about Scotland! ... Apart from red hair, which your women may find attractive but which in Africa is quite disgusting"—Amin saw himself as the natural leader of a Caledonian independence uprising: "the Last Rightful King of Scotland."

Although Whitaker is the frontrunner for the Best Actor Oscar, Amin technically is a supporting character. The fictional antihero protagonist—played well by young James McAvoy, who must be seven inches shorter and 80 pounds lighter than Whitaker—is a callow Scottish intern, who, like so many of his ancestors who built the British Empire, flees dour Presbyterian boredom for some fun in the tropical sun. While working in Uganda in 1971 as a mission doctor, idly trying to seduce his boss's wife, he's called to bandage the injured presidential wrist.

In Giles Foden's 1998 source novel, the Scottish doctor recalls, "I couldn't help feeling awed by the sheer size of him and the way ... he radiated a barely restrained energy. ... I felt—far from being the healer—that some kind of ele-

mental force was seeping into me." The doctor accepts Amin's impetuous offer to become his personal physician. He is soon advising Amin on policy, while trying to ignore the reports of political opponents being fed to the crocodiles, too mesmerized by the Big Man's outlandish charisma to flee.

"The Last King of Scotland" may be the best exploration yet of the Big Man syndrome, which, while most notorious for afflicting Africa, is hardly restricted to that continent. A Big Man's grandiose sense of entitlement assures him that he deserves to run things. What's odd is how often the rest of us, like McAvoy's doctor, agree with him, sometimes against our better instincts.

Big Men tend to be more masculine in physical and emotional traits like muscularity, self-confidence, and aggressiveness. But as the film illustrates, one of the strangest paradoxes about Big Men is how feminine their minds can be. Whitaker's Amin displays what would be called female intuition in anyone who's not such a mountain of a man. He can read the doctor's secrets off his face and then use his mercurial personality and verbal suppleness to charm and terrify him into obeying his sinister will rather than simply going home to sane Scotland.

Scottish director Kevin MacDonald, best known for the documentary "Touching the Void" about a mountain climber who saved himself by cutting the rope from which his friend dangled, shot "Last King" on location in Uganda to look like a slightly cheesy '70s blaxploitation flick. It's not a great film, but it is a memorable one. ■

Rated R for some strong violence and gruesome images, sexual content, and language.

BOOKS

[*The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins, Houghton Mifflin, 406 pages & *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*, Daniel Dennett, Viking, 448 pages]

The God Gene

By Patrick McNamara

RICHARD DAWKINS'S *The God Delusion* and Daniel Dennett's *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* argue that religion is a delusion or, at best, a misfiring of basic cognitive systems evolved for other more useful purposes like "agent detection" and placebo responding. But the authors do not believe that the delusion is harmless. Instead, they make clear that they see religion as a major source of evil in the world and go so far as to say that the religious instruction of children is "child abuse" when unaccompanied by countervailing scientific instruction.

If Dawkins and Dennett really believe that raising a child in a religious tradition is abusive, then they are morally bound to call for the protection of children subject to such abuse. Theoretically, abusers should be subject to legal penalties and perhaps even jailed. The state, in such cases, should use its coercive powers to restrain abusive parents and require them to undergo some sort of psychiatric treatment or thought-retraining program to cure their delusional illness.

Given the widespread nature of the delusion—both authors cite statistics showing that better than 64 percent of the U.S. population believes in God—America's psychiatric system will have to be expanded. It may be necessary to build retraining camps similar to those used throughout the Communist world to free recalcitrant religionists from their delusional devotion to God and

their irritating resistance to the state. Too bad we can't all be "brights," as the merry band of Dawkins- and Dennett-inspired atheists has dubbed itself. If only everyone were as emancipated as the brights from religion's dangerous spell, the world would be a better place!

Why can't religionists see the error of their ways, especially when the bright brights point this out to them? It must be that they are stupid. Dawkins is so convinced of the religion-as-delusion equation that he seems to endorse the long discredited notion of a correlation between high religiosity and low intelligence.

Yet no convincing data exist to warrant such a claim. There is, however, a well-attested inverse correlation in many Western cultures between years of education (not I.Q.) and religiosity, but most scientists who study religion believe that the correlation simply indexes one's level of exposure to the secular culture regnant in most Western universities. It simply demonstrates, in short, one's level of servility toward and indoctrination in that culture.

Dennett, to his credit, forthrightly raises the issue of who should teach the children about religion and very carefully treads the issue's thorny ethical undergrowth. At first, he seems to suggest that rules of informed consent should apply, but then in the spirit of the robust and kind-hearted tolerance he wishes to advance, he very magnanimously proposes that parents "may teach their children whatever religious doctrines they like" as long as they "don't teach their children anything that is likely to close their minds 1) through fear or hatred or 2) by disabling them from inquiry (by denying them an education, for instance, or keeping them entirely isolated from the world)."

Is Dennett blind to the potentially enormous implications of these proposed rules? Who decides when a child is being taught to hate or fear? Who decides when a child's mind is closed? Perhaps a specially educated elite of informed intellectuals should make such decisions; perhaps properly certified guardians; perhaps ministers of the state.

But Dawkins and Dennett should not be tarnished as a pair of unwitting fore-runners of a new set of thought-control programs. Dawkins is an evolutionary biologist who holds the Charles Simonyi Chair in the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University, and Dennett is a philosopher and Director of the Center for Cognitive Science at Tufts University. The two men have often been allies in the fight to defend Darwinian evolutionary science against the so-called creationists and the intelligent-design people. Dawkins first came to prominence in the 1970s on the strength of his book *The Selfish Gene*, which led to a more gene-centered view of evolutionary change. In such a perspective, organisms exist to propagate genes—not the other way around. He also later suggested that the basic units of cultural evolution might be called "memes," which can be thought of as sets of basic ideas that use the minds of humans as vehicles to proliferate and immortalize themselves. Both Dawkins and Dennett tend to see religion as a set of virulent and harmful memes, but little or no scientific evidence supports this view.

Dennett has made a number of important contributions to the philosophy of mind. His 1992 book, *Consciousness Explained*, debunked theories of consciousness in which a little observing man or homunculus sat somewhere at the back of the mind of the individual and did all of the hard work of being conscious. Dennett's 1996 book, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*, advocated extending Darwin's idea of the mechanism of natural selection to virtually all human experience.

Dawkins and Dennett's intellectual honesty and dedication to liberty of thought preclude their endorsement of the state's use of coercion to combat religious delusion. But their belief that religion is delusion appears to have led them into a position inimical to liberty of thought. A fair reading of the science of religion suggests in any case that religion is not mere delusion or cognitive error but a complex suite of biocultural

behaviors shaped by standard evolutionary forces and consequently ingrained deeply into the biology of the human psyche. It is pointless and counterproductive to equate religion with stupidity, abuse, and brainwashing, as such language only obscures the complex nature of religion and compounds this obscurantist move with an open invitation to reformers and state planners to regulate, restrict, and control yet another realm of human choice and behavior.

The fact that religion has an evolutionary history is no guarantee, however, that it is good for people. Murder has an evolutionary history too, and we do not (usually) promote murder. But neither do we describe murder as an instance of mere delusion. The label "delusion" here would be a category mistake, just as it is in the case of religion. But to the extent that ideas have consequences—and they do—this is one category mistake that could lead to disastrous social policy.

Instead of a research paradigm built around the old canard that religion is delusion, what's needed to throw light on both the constructive and destructive aspects of religiousness is concerted, well-funded, long-term research on religion and religiousness and a careful dissection of their natural functions. Whatever natural functions are discovered will not, of course, preclude discussion of the question of religion's basic truth value. Neither will it foreclose discussion of whether God exists. Instead, developing a natural history of religion will simply clear away all of the pointless chatter about religion being a delusion and free us from all the zealous reformers who want to save us from our own innate religiousness.

While calling for the development of a science of religion, however, Dawkins and Dennett, I fear, have already concluded that there is really no substantial phenomenon to be studied at all, since they believe that religion is mere delusion. Why then do the research if the jury's verdict is already in?

The fact that people believe in agents unseen so outrages Dawkins and Dennett

that they call religion virulently harmful. Apparently, they look at all of the charities, universities, hospitals, orphanages, clinics, poor houses, soup kitchens, and shelters financed and run by religious groups and conclude not only that all of these establishments mean nothing in comparison to the monstrous acts perpetrated by brainwashed religionists, but also that religion needs to be done away with completely. Dawkins in particular too easily dismisses the concern that massive crimes have also been committed by antireligious ideologues like Robespierre, Pol Pot, Hitler, and Stalin. He claims that these crimes were not committed in the name of atheism. Perhaps Dawkins does not read history as carefully as he reads the book of nature. All of the aforementioned individuals and many other anti-religious ideologues, like the early 20th-century Mexican revolutionaries, explicitly carried out programs of mass murder in the name of their militantly atheistic ideologies. These despots knew that they had to crush religious organizations and "erase the infamy" of religious belief and intolerance if they were ever to control the populations of their countries.

Religion, like any other human enterprise, should not be off limits to scientific study or public scrutiny. But curiously, for all of their calls for enhanced scrutiny and study of religion, Dawkins and Dennett seem hellbent on ignoring one of the most basic scientific findings of modern research on religion: namely, that religiousness is not due to stupidity, error, delusion, or trance.

Instead, religiousness appears to be *sui generis*—a phenomenon unto itself that cannot be reduced to more fundamental cognitive operations (though like any other biocultural adaptation, it utilizes more fundamental cognitive systems in its operations). Religiousness may even turn out to be a normal biologic trait strongly influenced by standard, nonmysterious evolutionary forces. Like that other quintessentially human skill, language, religiousness displays many of the telltale signs of a classic, evolutionarily-shaped adapta-

tion or suite of adaptations. It is found, for example, in all known human cultures, and furthermore, it is heritable. When one twin is religious, the other will likely be religious as well. Its "heritability coefficient" is moderately high, ranging from .40 to .70 (compared to heritability coefficients for traits that most scientists see as adaptations such as basic personality traits—.40 to .60—or intelligence—.50 to .60). Genes, such as the VMAT2 and the DRD4, are consistently associated with high scores on religiousness scales. And religiousness is now known to exhibit a definite brain basis: some drugs enhance religiousness, while others diminish it, and some brain regions are more consistently associated with religiousness than others.

All of the foregoing evidence is consistent with the idea that religiosity is an adaptation—not a mere delusion. Given that it is an adaptation, it is not surprising that basic components of religiosity are spontaneously acquired by children, who come to believe in omniscient supernatural agents in a relatively effortless manner. Children do not need to be force-fed religion because they naturally develop religion's basic component processes.

Why then do Dawkins and Dennett persist in treating religion as mere delusion or "spell"? Doing so leads them to reinvent the nonproblem of religion's persistence in an era of reason and scientific advancement. Most scholars of religion see no problem here, as religion, for better or worse, is considered the common biocultural inheritance of humankind. But for people who equate religion with stupidity, all sorts of problems arise, including the ethical issue of who will teach children about God. ■

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[*Marriage and Caste in America*,
Kay S. Hymowitz, Ivan R. Dee,
192 pages]

Mind the Marriage Gap

By Cheryl Miller

"IF THERE'S ONE THING men fear it's a woman who uses her critical faculties," complains Maureen Dowd in her most recent book on gender relations and, specifically, the question of why men are mysteriously turned off by a certain red-headed bombshell who just happens to have won a Pulitzer. It's a familiar cultural trope: the chauvinist pig in a pinstripe suit who prefers the secretary to the ball-busting career woman.

So dire are the career woman's marriage prospects, supposedly, that *Newsweek* reported in an infamous 1986 cover story that she was more likely to get killed by a terrorist than walk down the aisle. Though *Newsweek* recently retracted the story, the terrifying statistic found its way into pop culture, where it fueled the angst and anxieties of millions of single women. Popular series such as "Sex and the City" and "Ally McBeal" captured the zeitgeist with their free-spirited, successful heroines who were nevertheless desperate to land a man.

But for all the hand-wringing, the premise wasn't true. Women with college degrees—or even a graduate or professional degrees—were still settling down even as they chased after careers. Nor were these women more likely to divorce or enter Murphy Brown-style single motherhood. Just the opposite was true: they were more likely to marry and less likely to divorce or become single mothers than their undereducated sisters. The self-styled revolutionaries most eager to escape the demands of family life turned out to be more traditional in their personal lives than the supposedly conventional poor and uneducated proles.

This surprising contradiction is the subject of Kay Hymowitz's *Marriage and Caste in America*. Drawing from essays she wrote for *City Journal*, the Manhattan Institute fellow explores the consequences of this "marriage gap" between rich and poor—how it has exacerbated inequality and condemned legions of women and children to poverty.

Beginning in 1960, Hymowitz writes, America underwent an "unmarriage revolution." The divorce and nonmarital birthrates soared across class lines. But around 1980, these trends began to diverge for the upper and lower classes. Both the divorce rate and out-of-wedlock birthrate for upper-class women leveled and then fell in the 1990s. The divorce rate also fell for lower-class women—but only because so few were marrying in the first place. With the decline in the marriage rate, the out-of-wedlock birthrate increased so that by 2005, 52 percent of nonmarital births were to women without a high-school diploma, compared to only 9 percent to women with a graduate or professional degree. The unmarriage revolution has been particularly devastating among African-Americans and, more recently, among Hispanics. More than two-thirds of black children and nearly half of Hispanic children are born out of wedlock.

As mountains of social-science data make clear, children raised in single-mother homes suffer in comparison to children raised by both biological parents, according to practically every social indicator. Even controlling for parental income and education, these children are twice as likely to drop out of high school and more likely to experiment with drugs and abuse alcohol, be incarcerated, and have behavioral or psychological problems. Worse still, they are more likely to remain unwed themselves and have children outside of marriage, thereby continuing the cycle for yet another generation. As a consequence of the marriage gap, America is on the verge of becoming a nation of "separate and unequal families" divided between "a comfortable, self-perpetuat-

ing middle class" and "a self-perpetuating single-mother proletariat."

There's no question that marriage confers material benefits. Thirty-six percent of female-headed families are below the poverty line, while only 6 percent of married-couple families are. Yet more important, Hymowitz argues, is the "human capital" marriage offers. By providing a "life script" for men and women, marriage nurtures the values—self-control, responsibility, prudence—that enable people to thrive in the new knowledge economy. Marriage orients men and women toward the future and makes the choice of a spouse with whom they will create a family an important—if not the most important—decision in their lives. According to Hymowitz, "A marriage orientation—not just marriage itself—is part and parcel of [their] bourgeois ambition."

This bourgeois ambition manifests itself most clearly in middle- and upper-class couples' devotion to "the Mission": the determined effort of parents to develop their children to fullest potential—or, at the very least, to get them into Harvard. The Mission, Hymowitz admits, can lead to excess. Ask any observer of a middle-class suburban household with its trunks of educational toys, its overscheduled kids running from ballet to piano practice to the evening's soccer game, and the endless college prep that resembles nothing so much as the arms race. But it does get results. One study of students at the nation's top 50 schools found that students from "disrupted families"—that is, families in which children did not grow up with both biological parents—were half as likely to attend a selective college.

Drawing on interviews with inner-city couples in Brooklyn, Hymowitz describes in dispiriting detail just how the other half lives. Family arrangements among these unmarried have-nots are messy and haphazard. Often the men already have children by other women, further straining their latest relationship as the women fight over the man's attention and resources. Few hold down steady jobs, choosing instead to

make a quick buck selling drugs or mooching off their current girlfriends and family. The women are resigned to their partner's infidelities. Of her philandering, controlling boyfriend, Patricia, a young black woman with a two-year-old son, sighs, "I think the fool is just like that. He's never going to change." Or as one woman more succinctly put it: "Motherf---er not faithful."

Many women see single motherhood as a rite of passage, as proof of one's maturity. They take pride in bringing up their children by themselves, on not depending on a man for support or a paycheck. On hip-hop and R&B stations, paeans to female independence and self-reliance abound. "I see ya payin' ya bills, I see ya workin' ya job," enthuses "American Idol" star Fantasia Barrino—herself a teen mother—in her single-mom anthem, "Baby Mama." Likewise, Destiny's Child, the pop trio headed by Beyoncé Knowles, gives props to "all the honeys who makin' money. ... all the mommas who profit dollars" in their hit "Independent Women." Never mind that few of the proud "baby mamas" singing along with Beyoncé can afford basic necessities let alone the "rocks" the diva boasts of buying herself or that despite Barrino's assurance that "we can go anywhere, we can do anything," few teen moms will escape the poverty of the inner city.

So devastating is the portrait Hymowitz paints of the inner city that it's hard to accept the giddy optimism of her last two chapters. "It's morning after in America," Hymowitz exclaims, pointing to surveys showing the return of young Americans to traditional values and the slow slide of the feminist movement into irrelevance. She also makes the rather dubious assertion that American culture is becoming less sexualized. "Miss Prim is in," she declares. (Paris Hilton must not have gotten the memo.)

But how have things improved among the underclass? Not much is the answer. Teen pregnancies have declined but only as pregnancies to single women in their twenties have gone up. And Hymowitz makes no mention of the situation in Hispanic communities, where, as her col-

league Heather MacDonald reports, the out-of-wedlock birthrate is now highest in the country—over three times that of whites and Asians and nearly one and a half times that of black women.

Hymowitz advocates marriage counseling programs and parenting classes for unwed couples. She also argues that schools need to teach young women and men that it's in their self-interest (and their future children's) to postpone childbearing until after marriage. "We haven't appealed to people's rational self-interest," she told the *Wall Street Journal*. "They don't know that they're ... limiting the prosperity of their children's future." This seems likely to meet the same success as one anti-teen pregnancy measure Hymowitz describes in which a school required students to carry around sacks of flour as if they were babies. The next day several of the girls showed up with their sacks clad in newly purchased outfits from Baby Gap.

The problem can't simply be that no one is talking about the "M-word" as Hymowitz claims. Many of Hymowitz's unmarried interviewees cherish white-picket dreams of marriage and children, and more than a few know from bitter experience what it means to grow up without a father. Yet for all their good intentions, they just can't seem to live up to their own ideals.

These couples exhibit what political theorist William A. Galston calls "magical thinking." It's as if they see no connection between their present actions and their future plans. When Hymowitz asks a group of women about their career plans, they answer that they are going to be doctors, lawyers, chefs—much like, Hymowitz notes, a four-year-old says that he wants to be an astronaut when he grows up. Hymowitz then asks the women if they think having a baby will get in the way of their dreams, and the women are adamant: "No. Not at all."

It's not that these couples don't understand the importance of marriage. It's that they lack the life skills to plan for it. Hymowitz may have fallen into the age-old problem of the chicken and the egg. Is the marriage gap the cause—or just a

symptom—of social breakdown among America's working class?

The contrast with Europe is illustrative. Unlike in the U.S., unwed, cohabiting unions in Europe are not associated with higher rates of poverty and family disruption. In fact, although Sweden's out-of-wedlock birthrate is almost double that of the United States, two-thirds of all 15-year-olds live with both of their biological parents—a figure similar to those in France and Germany. If marriage is so important to the cultivation of bourgeois virtues, why haven't Europeans experienced the kind of social dysfunction found in America's inner cities?

With *Marriage and Caste in America*, Hymowitz provides an arresting diagnosis of American social ills. But to find a cure, we'll need to look deeper. ■

Cheryl Miller is a writer living in Washington, D.C.

[*The American Way of Strategy: U.S. Foreign Policy and the American Way of Life*, Michael Lind, Oxford University Press, 304 pages]

Real Kantian

By Michael C. Desch

ACCORDING TO THE New America Foundation's Michael Lind, the "American way of strategy" has consistently provided the United States with the surest means of maintaining our external security without compromising our domestic liberty. "For more than two centuries," he writes, "mainstream American foreign policy has sought to protect two elements of American Republican liberty—the freedom of the American state from other states and the freedom of Americans from their own state—by means of the American way of strategy." No other conceivable grand strategy—not isolationism, offshore balancing, empire, or appease-

ment—can square this circle, in his view. Not surprisingly, he concludes that, to the country's peril, George W. Bush has abandoned the American way of strategy, and future administrations would do well to return to it.

In Lind's account, America has managed to balance security and liberty through its unique synthesis of liberalism and realism. Liberalism establishes the objective of American grand strategy (to protect our domestic way of life via international co-operation), while realism, in the form of a shared hegemony established through a concert of great powers, is the instrument through which the United States can remain secure without becoming a "garrison state." Lind's argument is hard to categorize: it is a mixture of Wilsonian idealism and hard-headed power politics.

Lind is not the only one trying to synthesize realism and liberalism these days. Writers like Charles Krauthammer ("democratic realism") and Francis Fukuyama ("realistic Wilsonianism") also seek to marry these two very disparate approaches by arguing that American power can be used to spread democracy around the world. Even some liberals like Hillary Clinton now want to blend realism and liberalism in their post-Bush grand strategy. It seems as if everyone is some sort of realist now.

But what makes Lind's approach so interesting is that his particular synthesis is similar to the system laid out by the 18th-century Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant in his seminal treatise, "Perpetual Peace." To characterize Lind as a Kantian is not, by any means, to dismiss his argument out of hand. Kant was a very subtle thinker whose influence spans both modern liberalism and modern realism.

Most of us, and apparently Lind himself, regard Kant as the wellspring of what Lind rightly dismisses as "democratic revolutionism": the notion that the United States will make itself more secure simply by spreading democracy around the world, either unilaterally and by force or multilaterally and through diplomacy. The truth is that Kant was no

partisan of democracy. He regarded it as a dangerous and unstable system of government. Kant's preferred political system was republicanism, in which sovereign states whose authority was divided between executive and legislative branches of government on a domestic level co-operated with other states on an international level.

Kant's system of perpetual peace is compatible with some types of modern realism. He argued, for example, that balance-of-power dynamics would play a key role in making international republicanism viable. Indeed, anyone who doubts Kant's influence on modern realism should read Kenneth Waltz's 1962 essay on Kant to understand how significantly Kant influenced Waltz's seminal realist work, *Theory of International Politics*.

Lind shares with Kant more than just an affinity for republicanism and some tenets of realism. Like Kant, he thinks

that an anarchic international system is extremely dangerous. "It is futile to expect freedom and democracy to survive unimpaired, if they survive at all, in prolonged conditions of acute national danger," Lind writes.

Lind also believes that the grave peril of an unregulated international system will motivate the United States to eventually exit the international Hobbesian state of nature: "The only certain way to preserve civil liberties in the United States is to make ... moments of peril rare, and that can only be done by promoting a less dangerous international environment."

Furthermore, Lind offers a republican solution that, if implemented, could provide us with perpetual peace. Kant proposed a "republican league" as the basis for global republicanism. Similarly, Lind advocates a republican great power concert. "The purpose of a great power concert," Lind maintains, almost channeling

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Kant, "is not to produce liberty, democracy, and the rule of law in every country, but to provide every country with the shared public good of peace and basic order, so that the need to prepare for war does not impair the ability of particular nations to establish liberty, democracy, and the rule of law by their own efforts inside their own borders."

Lind's neo-Kantian system stands or falls with two key propositions. The first proposition is that the only way to reconcile domestic liberty with international security is to replace anarchy with hegemony. Unless the United States reduces the external threats it faces, it cannot preserve its internal freedoms. The second proposition is that enough great powers will see the merit in such a system that they will come together voluntarily to impose order internationally. Unlike the unilateral hegemony that Bush and his neoconservative allies advocate, Lind envisions a collective hegemony that will provide peace and security.

Both of these propositions are debatable. Like Kant before him, Lind overstates the danger that international anarchy poses to the great powers. As Thomas Hobbes, the most influential theorist of the political consequences of anarchy, pointed out in *Leviathan*, life in the state of nature is very different for individuals and states. For the former, it is a matter of life and death to sign the social contract and get out of it. For the latter, it is more often a matter of convenience.

Lind also suggests that whereas the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans once reliably protected the United States from attack, in today's world of airplanes and missiles, the United States is now as vulnerable to devastating attack as if its enemies were right next door. This, however, ignores the fact that America's own bombers and missiles, many of which are equipped with nuclear bombs and warheads, deter attacks from other great powers. Distance, as Lind claims, may no longer afford the protection it once did. But the same technologies that make us vulnerable to other great powers also make it possible to protect ourselves from them through mutual deterrence.

Lind admits that the United States can probably defend itself against all comers but fears that it can only do so at the cost of its domestic liberty. It's true, as he says, that war and preparation for war have eroded domestic liberty in the past. But such erosion is not inevitable. For example, nuclear weapons, among the most devastating engines of war known to man, are also among the cheapest and least manpower-intensive parts of modern great power arsenals. The U.S. spends a mere 13 percent of its defense budget on its nuclear deterrent and for that relatively small sum has purchased nearly absolute security against attack from other great powers.

Of course, the United States cannot use its nuclear arsenal to protect all of its interests abroad. But it doesn't need to rely solely on conventional military forces to protect them either. It can, for example, depend upon the international system's inherent balancing dynamics to protect many of its interests. If those balancing dynamics fail to operate, as they do on occasion, America, like Britain in the 19th century, can intervene from beyond the horizon using limited military power to re-establish the international balance of power in its favor without having to curtail civil liberties at home. It is not inevitable, therefore, that under conditions of international anarchy, America will become a garrison state unless it joins a great power concert.

Lind characterizes his concert as "an alliance without permanent enemy." But such a view neglects the role of a common threat in facilitating great power co-operation. Indeed, alliances have seldom operated without one. The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union co-operated reasonably well against Nazi Germany during the Second World War. But with Germany's defeat, that cooperation quickly broke down. Similarly, in the face of the Soviet threat, the United States and its allies in Europe achieved remarkable unity. That unity, however, did not survive the Cold War's end, as America discovered in 2003 during the Iraq War.

Since he has written a book about Alexander Hamilton, Lind, not surprisingly, is much taken with the American Federalists. In fact, to undergird his argument that the great powers will find a concert to be in their mutual interest, he employs the logic of Hamilton's arguments in *The Federalist Papers* for a stronger union among the 13 colonies. It is true that part of Hamilton's rationale for greater unity of the states was to avoid conflict among them, but Lind ignores the role, identified by John Jay in "Federalist No. 3" and "Federalist No. 4," that the threat from other great powers played in forging this union.

Lind expects that his great power concert will provide order and stability—what economists refer to as "public goods." But ironically, the great power co-operation that Lind assumes will be part of the foundation of his concert can only come about if one hegemonic power is willing to bear a disproportionate share of the concert's costs.

In the end, Lind admits that there is one area of the world where his great power concert will not work: the Middle East. The region's plethora of radical states, enduring rivalries, and deep distrust of America make Lind think that a strategy of offshore balancing is the United States' optimal approach there. But given that the same is true of many other areas of the world, why not embrace that strategy globally, as realists like Christopher Layne, John Mearsheimer, and Stephen Walt have long advocated? Moreover, if America's international interests and domestic liberty are fully compatible with a strategy of offshore balancing in such an important area as the Middle East, the logic of Lind's argument that we need a different strategy for the rest of the world seems less compelling. ■

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Foreign Affairs Advice



Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is in hot water with women in general and his wife in particular, but don't feel too sorry for him. He's

got 25 million Italian men behind him, plus a large majority of Latin males throughout the world. As some of you may have read, Berlusconi's wife of 20 years and mother of three of his five children has publicly demanded an apology from him for chatting up other women. By chatting up, I mean flirting in public with ladies and paying them compliments. Mrs. Berlusconi wrote an open letter to the left-leaning *La Repubblica* newspaper, which was published on the front page. In choosing this particular paper, Veronica Berlusconi was quite naughty. *La Repubblica* has been her husband's severest critic: the paper has treated him not unlike the *Washington Post* treated President Richard Nixon a generation ago.

Needless to say, Europe's cheesy tabloids have had a field day. They've quoted Berlusconi ad nauseam, including his corny lines like "If I wasn't married I'd marry you straight away," and "I have 70 billion dollars and don't know how to spend it." (The latter, I admit, somewhat of a no-no, but extremely effective under any and all circumstances.)

Berlusconi, a man I've never met but approve of very much, is no chauvinist pig. Like all Italians, he loves women, and flirting with a woman is considered every red-blooded Italian male's birthright. By dallying with any *bel-ladonna* in sight, an Italian thinks he is doing womankind a favor. Yet Berlusconi's wife thought that his amiable flattery was "damaging to [her] dignity." (She must have American friends to be so touchy.) It was not meant to. Nothing

in Italian eyes should be taken too seriously. The secret of *la dolce vita* and *la bella figura* is that of form over substance. History, from Roman times until the present, has taught the Italians to steer clear of getting in too deep.

Anglo-Saxon mothers teach their children discipline; Jewish mothers teach guilt. But Latin mothers offer undiluted love and support. Italian men live with their mothers even after they're married, so they tend to remain somewhat childish. I know what I'm talking about. I stayed with my parents until late in life, with the predictable results. But back to flirting.

About three years ago, I was rung up by Rachel Johnson, an English writer who was researching her novel, *Notting Hell*, about a rich London borough where a lot of hanky-panky takes place. She asked for my advice, and I gave her my ten commandments about having one's cake and eating it too. She shaped her novel using my ten tips as a guide. (It became an instant bestseller.) Here they are, and I hope all loyal *TAC* readers put them to good use:

1. Always remind your wife that you love her and will never leave her for anyone else, ever.
2. Always remind your prospective lover that, if she gives in, you will never leave her and that you love her more than your wife.
3. Always promise marriage. Promising marriage has served me well these last 50 years, although if one is past 60—or 70 like me—he should also promise that his last will and

testament will look very kindly upon anyone who has had carnal knowledge of the soon-to-be deceased.

4. Never raise your voice or show anger. Always fake jealousy with both your wife and your lovers.
5. Deny, deny, deny. Never admit the slightest indiscretion. Confessions are for amateur adulterers and devout Catholics.
6. Be very generous before and after the affair. Women talk, and word that one is generous gets around quicker than bad news.
7. Marry a beautiful woman, preferably upper class and sure of herself, and cuckold her with lesser, uglier beings. She won't mind, and they will be flattered to cuckold someone superior to them.
8. Be romantic. Whisper, write notes to both the wife and the lover.
9. Make love to everyone concerned regularly. Well-serviced women do not go looking for trouble.
10. Always be in a good mood, and always make women laugh. Show me a man who makes the fairer sex laugh, and I will show you a man who scores a lot.

There is, of course, a word of warning. In Italy, Greece, and in South America, flirting and seduction may be considered masculine virtues, but they are also considered feminine vices. We have been petted and flattered for much too long by our mamas to give equal rights to our wives. Only gringos are capable of that. Anyway, if you are so inclined, feel free to use Taki's top tips, but if you get caught and taken to the cleaners, do not expect any compensation from yours truly or this magazine. ■



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